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RICA'S DAUGHTER



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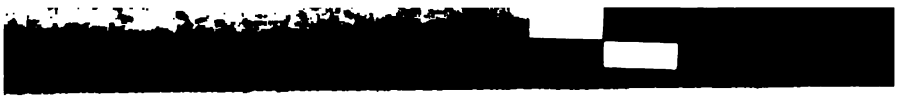


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AMERICA'S DAUGHTER



No. 111
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AMERICA'S DAUGHTER

BY

RENA I. HALSEY

Author of "Blue Robin, the Girl Pioneer"

ILLUSTRATED BY NANA FRENCH BICKFORD



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AMERICA'S DAUGHTER

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AMERICA'S DAUGHTER

CHAPTER I

DAUGHTERS OF AMERICA

RONA, in tune with the melodious strains so squeakily ground out by the hurdy-gurdy man on the corner, began to hum softly. Then her brown eyes softened into a smile, in recognition of the fact that the sunshine of a balmy spring day is so apt to star itself on one's memory with old-time tunes, operatic airs, and — an organ-grinder.

Another moment and she had halted in front of an old-fashioned four-story brick house, with an antiquated iron railing skirting the little wooden balcony in front of the parlor windows. As her glance swept upward over the cheerless, somber front, with the shutters of the many windows habitually closed to air and sunshine, the smile and tune died.

"Why, what can —" The next moment she was running lightly up the stone steps. As she reached the top the front door opened noiselessly, and Maggie confronted her.

"Oh, Miss Rona," she cried in an anxious tone, "I

am so glad you have come! Mr. Hillis has had a bad fall. The rug slipped on the hardwood floor and he went with it. We can't get him up, and he lies there with his foot all doubled up under him."

"Have you 'phoned for the doctor?" inquired the girl anxiously, throwing her schoolbooks hastily on the hall-stand and starting for the stairs.

"Yes, several times," replied Maggie, "but he has not come in yet from his afternoon calls." But the girl was already on the upper landing, hurrying towards the front room, from where, behind the closed door, came the sound of heavy groans. Her heart sank with dismal apprehension, and then her hand was on the knob.

The door swung open, and Rona saw Mr. Hillis lying on the floor, his face pale and drawn with pain, while long, rasping groans forced themselves between his clenched teeth. His right foot was doubled up beneath him in an ugly way that made the girl involuntarily gasp. And then in a quavering voice she cried, "Oh, Mr. Hillis, what can I do for you?"

As Rona spoke, the man opened his eyes wide. He made an attempt at a smile as he murmured in detached sentences, "Well, I guess I'm — done for — I've hurt my foot — ooch — if I could only get it — straightened out." His voice died away in another groan, and his eyes closed again beneath the knit brows.

Rona knelt down and peered at the doubled-up leg. "Ah, I see!" Then a sudden determination seized her. "Call Tom, Ellen, quick! Here, Maggie, get a pillow! Ah, that's better!" ended the girl as she carefully lifted Mr. Hillis's head while Maggie slipped the cushion under.

"Now, Maggie, stay here; I'll be right back!" For in those few moments of ministration it had come to her what she could do. As she flew out of the room she met Ellen, who informed her with a brightening face that Tom would be up in a moment.

Rona nodded quickly and flew into the bathroom. In a few seconds she had seized a bottle from the medicine chest, poured a little into a glass, and then was back in the room.

"Now, Maggie," she cried hurriedly, "hold up Mr. Hillis's head," and then, as the woman complied, a teaspoonful of the stimulant was placed to his lips. In a moment it had been swallowed and Rona, with a relieved sigh, turned to Tom, the chauffeur, who had now entered the room. Tom, who was a big husky young Irishman, managed, with the help of the two maids, under Rona's supervision, to raise Mr. Hillis, while the girl, on her hands and knees, drew the bent-up limb back to its normal position. There was a quick, short imprecation, another deep groan, and then the injured man murmured brokenly, "Good, Rona; that is — some better."

They now managed, by adroit and careful handling, to get the sufferer upon a couch, and then again Rona flew out of the room. In a moment she was back with a roll of lint and some linen bandages. Then, with a gentle, easing motion, she drew off her patient's boot and stocking, and in a moment was deftly binding the injured foot with a linen compress.

She stopped every moment or so to think, for it had been some time since she had had any practice in this work. Presently her task was done; the stocking had been replaced, and a warm rug had been thrown over the feet of the patient, who now seemed to be resting comfortably, for his groans had ceased.

With a sigh of thankfulness that she had been able to render even this aid, Rona dispatched Tom with the automobile for the doctor, telling him to wait and bring him back.

An hour later, Rona hurriedly arose from her seat by the window, where she had been anxiously watching to welcome the family physician, who was Mr. Hillis's long-time friend.

"Well, what's all this pow-wow about?" Dr. McLane demanded as he patted the young girl on the head in his fatherly fashion, while looking with keen eyes at the patient, who, at the sound of the doctor's voice, opened his eyes.

"Just my luck, doctor," he began in an aggrieved tone; "slipped on the rug — fell with my leg under

me. Got a few broken bones, I suppose. By Jove! it's hard — when I had to get that deal off with —"

"Hm-m," returned the doctor, as he drew a chair up to the couch. "What were you doing, trying to learn the latest Castle trot?" he inquired in his jollying tone, as he drew aside the rug and began to inspect the injured foot.

For a moment or so there was a trying silence. Rona's heart was jumping in a very agitating manner as she stood watching the moving fingers with taut breath. Oh, if she had done the wrong thing! Would he never get through looking at that foot? The doctor raised his head. "Who bandaged this foot?" His voice was gruff, and his gray eyes peered sharply from beneath his bushy eyebrows.

"I did," came in a very small voice from the girl, as with hands clenched tightly she came slowly forward.

"You?" queried the doctor, raising his eyebrows in surprise. "Who taught you to put on a compress?"

"Why — er — a lot of us girls —" gulped Rona, "took a course in First Aid to the Injured — last year. Oh, I was so careful to do it as — Dr. Laird — showed us!" The girl's tone was almost pathetic in its earnestness as her eyes gleamed appealingly.

"Showed you — humph!" The doctor drew off his glasses, wiped them carefully on a chamois he took

from his pocket, and then said, "Come here, girl."

Rona, shaking as if she had the ague, managed to crawl slowly to his side.

"Give me your hand," said the doctor in the same gruff tone, but there was a certain note in its gruffness this time that caused the girl's heart to give a wild leap. She looked at the doctor and saw that his eyes were twinkling under their gray tangle. "No, I'm not going to eat you," he continued with a chuckle as he took the slim fingers so uncertainly held towards him in his big grasp. "I simply want to congratulate you on having done as neat a little job as I have seen for some time." With these unexpected words of encouragement Rona's hand was given a hearty shake, and then the doctor had turned his back and was rummaging in his little black case.

"Why — do you — mean —" the girl's breath came in surprised gasps —"that it is — all right?"

"I most certainly do," answered the big man; "it's an O. K. job."

The next moment, with her eyes glowing with pleasure, she was listening to the doctor, as, in answer to a question from Mr. Hillis, he cried, "Humbug! You don't want a nurse. None better than this little girl right here. It's a compound fracture all right. What else could you expect if you will do acrobatic feats at your time of life?" The doctor shrugged his shoulders indifferently, but his eyes gleamed merrily as he

nodded at Rona. "Now, little lady," he continued, "listen to me."

And Rona did listen with every nerve, muscle, and faculty at attention. Why, she felt as if her heart and breath were standing still as she registered every word told her by the physician as to the way of caring for the patient.

The morning following the accident Rona came flying into the kitchen with a letter for Maggie. She paused abruptly as she saw she was busy over the tray with Mr. Hillis's breakfast, and her eyes shadowed.

"Oh, Maggie, let me carry up the tray, won't you?" There was more than the usual coaxing note in the girl's voice as she glanced at the firmly set mouth in the rugged face bending over the toast.

"No, you just let it alone, Miss Rona," answered the elderly woman sharply, "and get off to school. It's half-past eight." Maggie raised her head and glanced with keen eyes at the earnest young face with its broad, low brow, rimmed by fluffy brown hair with its twinkles of red, divided, boy-fashion, on one side. The grim sternness in her gray eyes softened as her glance lingered on the appeal in the eyes, aglint, like the hair, with shadows of red. But with a sudden clap of her lips she went on with her toasting.

"But, Maggie," persisted the young voice, "I don't think I ought to leave Mr. Hillis. The doctor said I was to nurse him — and —"

"*You nurse him?*" mimicked the woman aggravatingly, although her eyes twinkled humorously. "And who has nursed him and his good lady — may her soul rest in peace — these many long years? And, Rona," the tone had changed, "didn't you tell me you had examinations to-day?"

"Yes," nodded the girl, "but I can take them to-morrow."

"No, be off with you, and no more nonsense," replied Maggie in such a decided voice that Rona turned reluctantly away. Then she gave a sigh of relief, for after all she was anxious to finish those exams, and of course Maggie could nurse Mr. Hillis better than she could — the old dear! And then she was running blithely up the stairs after her books, again humming the little snatch of melody that had been running through her brain ever since she had heard it the afternoon before.

It was long after two o'clock, and the girls, freed from the strain of their examinations, were making the schoolroom in Reval Hall resound to their merry chatter. As one or two commented on some knotty problem in their examination papers, each one discussing her way of working it out, while others gave vent to joyous bursts of hilarity that the last of the exams was over, Margery Heath added her voice to the general hubbub.

"Oh, girls," she exclaimed with a deep-drawn sigh, "isn't the Best Beloved a dear? Every time I asked her a question, somehow, although she never told me a thing, the inspiration came, and the whole answer would immediately rush pell-mell into my noodle."

"It wasn't any inspiration, Marge," cried Judith Carvel, a slim, graceful girl, with a bright, intelligent face, who was somewhat older than her companions. There was a teasing twinkle in her keen, dark eyes as she went on to say, "It was telepathy, a sort of psychological reflection from Miss Marston's mind to yours, and —"

"Hear! Hear!" laughingly interrupted Mary Rolfe, alias Poco, a tall, lean girl with a relative-defense bump on her nose that had gained her undue notoriety. In an unlucky moment of confidence she had vaingloriously boasted that the much-despised bump was a heritage from the ancient and honorable Lady Rebecca of Jamestown fame. Her mates, in quick appreciation of this claim to blood royal, had immediately dubbed it the Pocahontas nose, hence the nickname of Poco. But, notwithstanding the undesirable heritage, the girl's velvety black eyes and roguish dimples made her a prime favorite with the girls, who knew that her warm Southern heart and perennial good nature meant a staunch friend in time of need.

But the discussion at issue was halted as Mae Allyn

suddenly called out, "What is Peg Ditmas up to now?" pointing to a girl with sun-gold hair, in a blue Russian blouse, who was making strange hieroglyphics on the blackboard.

The girl, as she heard her name mentioned, swung about towards Poco, clicked her heels together, and as she snapped her three fingers to her forehead in the Girl Scout salute cried, "Be Prepared!"

Poco stared a moment — one never knew what Peggy was going to do next — and then with a smile raised her hand in a return salute, as she laughingly answered, "Well, Sister Scout, I am prepared, what next?"

But the next moment as if to show her preparedness she had chimed in with Peggy, who was buoyantly trilling,

> "'Girl Scouts are we, and you never can guess,
> All the things we are able to do.
> First Aid and Semaphore, wig-wagging, too;
> Then we do dancing, both fancy and plain;
> Still are the champs of the basketball game,
> And from our Captain we've all learned to be
> Of service to each and to all.'"

And then Peggy, with a flourish of her hand, still holding the chalk, faced about and was again making hieroglyphics on the board.

"Well, I declare," commented Mae Allyn airishly, "if those two Scouts aren't always kowtowing to one another, one would think —"

But no one waited to hear what "one would think" as there was a general flurry in the direction of the new diversion, while Rona, who was standing near the board laughingly inquired, "What in the name of common sense, Peg, are you drawing?" staring curiously at a white rabbit sitting on its haunches, with its nose buried in a handkerchief three times as large as its body.

"Oh, it's a reproduction of Harold's latest cartoon," dimpled Peggy,—"a snapshot from the line of spectators on the day of the Preparedness parade. These marks here," dabbing the board with her chalk, "represent our crowd on the line of march. The long line flanked by the shorter ones is Madame Reval and the Educationists of Reval Hall. And these three tiny dots are the Joy Girl, in her Stars and Stripes gown, carrying the flag, with Mae and Betty holding the streamers, and —"

"But the rabbit, Peg?" interrupted a chorus of voices impatiently.

"Oh, the rabbit —" the girl's blue eyes glinted mischievously —"is the great Peace Advocate having a little weep. And this antiquated damsel," indicating the caricature of an elderly maiden, "is his chum, hysterically trying to wave her flag of peace. And down here, see, in the corner, is the down-trodden worm trying to crawl out of sight."

"Poor things," commented one of the girls, "they

all look down and out. But I guess they know by this time that America stands as one unit for defense."

"Yes, and the whole world knows it, too," added Poco. And then, with a swing of her long arms, she had signaled, and the next moment they were all marching single file around the room, each girl with her hands on the shoulders of the one in front of her, as they singsonged loudly, if not very harmoniously,

> "'We'll be ready, good old Uncle Sam,
> For the sub, and shell, and cannon's roar.
> We'll be ready, for the beans and ham,
> We'll be ready when you call to war!'"

But in a moment Poco, who had headed the line, caught sight of Judith gesticulating to them. With a hurried movement she broke ranks, crying, "Oh, girls, let's be good! See, Judith is beckoning to us. I think she wants to start —" But the rest was lost, for her mates had hurriedly scattered and were grouping themselves about Judith as she stood, impatiently waiting for them, in front of the desk.

As the hubbub subsided she exclaimed nervously, "Girls, I presume you all got my note —" Her voice trembled slightly, and then, with a quick intake of breath, as her eyes scanned the faces surrounding her, she continued, "I asked you all to meet me here this afternoon — well — I wanted to talk to you about forming a club." The girl smiled a little uncertainly. But the smile had its effect, and the momentary strain

in the expectant attitudes of the girls gave way, and in an instant they were all smiling with their leader, quick to appreciate that something worth while was coming.

"It has come to me—" The smile changed to a frown as Peggy jumped to her feet crying, "Oh, I say, girls, where did Rona go? Oh, Jude—" Peggy turned pleading eyes towards their leader—"don't do anything until Rona comes," craning her neck and peering at the door of the schoolroom as she spoke.

"Well, I like that," declared Mae Allyn pettishly, the Dresden-like prettiness of her face marred by a petulant frown. "One would think, to hear you, Peg, that Rona Hillis was the only girl with brains at Reval Hall."

"Oh, no," returned Peggy with a nonchalant toss of her blonde head, "there may be one or two," emphasizing the "one or two" pointedly, "who possibly equal Rona in smartness."

"Oh, it's not *that*," broke in a gentle voice from the outer edge of the group, "it is just because every one loves Rona."

"Elizabeth Bird, you are a dear!" exclaimed Peggy, throwing a kiss from the tips of her fingers to the owner of the voice. "You have said well, for indeed every one loves Rona, even her Royal Highness, our little woman of '76, only she is modest about showing it," added the fun-loving girl, turning laughing eyes

towards Miss Mae, who, with a toss of her head in a sudden access of frigidity, ignored the teasing declaration.

At the clash of arms between the opposing forces Judith quickly repressed a smile and then cried warmly: "Yes, indeed, we all love Rona. But where is she? Do any of you girls know? I didn't see her go out." Her eyes swept the faces of the girls inquiringly.

"Would ye be likin' me to bring her to ye?" demanded a new voice, its sometime brogue, especially if its owner was excited, telling, as well as the blue-black eyes, of Celtic origin.

"Why, yes, Ann, if you will," assented Judith, smiling at little Ann Kelly, whose face radiated joy and good will, as with alert eagerness she awaited her reply. "But hurry, Joy Girl, will you," Judith added, "for we are losing time."

As Ann disappeared with a sudden assumption of dignity Judith slipped into the seat of honor behind the desk, and, tapping with her pencil, cried, "Girls, will you all be seated, please, and let me have the floor for a few moments?"

She nodded curtly, but with rising color, to the clapping that greeted her request, as she continued: "It has come to me that our dearly loved principal has been undergoing no little distress at the tumultuous spirit — as she calls it — that has suddenly developed

in our school. She claims that in asserting our right to liberty of speech in our many arguments about neutrality, preparedness, the right of women to vote, in fact —" Judith's eyes gleamed humorously —" a thousand and one problems quite beyond our ken, that we have become hoydenish."

An amused smile passed swiftly over the faces of the girls, while one or two emitted a slight laugh, which was quickly repressed, however, as Judith raised her hand, and the serious gravity of her face deepened.

" We want to show Madame Reval that we are not a lot of wrangling schoolgirls; that we, too, are lovers of peace."

" Peace at any price? " ventured an audacious one laughingly.

" No, indeed," rejoined Judith warmly. " We are not white-hearted, but red-blooded Americans. Of course we all want peace — no one wants to fight; but if we can't have peace unless at the sacrifice of what is right, then we have just *got to fight!*"

One or two clapped their hands in approval, but Judith continued hurriedly: " I think you girls all know what I mean, for no matter how we pommel and pound each other in our war of words, are we not, after all, children of one nation? And do we not "— Judith drew a deep breath —" all love our flag and our national honor, and at heart, girls, would we not

all of us be ready to fight and die for that honor if necessary, and for the principles back of our flag?"

As the loud clapping that followed this speech subsided Judith continued: "Of course, you girls all know that across the sea they are fighting the greatest war ever known in the world. Now it seems to me that this war is our war. We, as the daughters of this nation, in appreciation of the founders who gave us what Miss Marston calls democratic liberty, and in honor of the heroes of Bunker Hill, who maintained that liberty by making us a nation, should show the American spirit. And I think the American spirit means that we should live these principles, this liberty, in our lives by wanting the nations who are fighting, to have the peace and the liberty that has made this the greatest nation in the world."

Judith was forced to pause, not only to get her breath after this strenuous speech, but because the girls had broken forth into such riotous applause that it called for emphatic signaling on her part to enforce quietness again.

"As we all know," continued the speaker, her eyes darkening sorrowfully, "just we girls can't stop the war, and it would seem that we couldn't do much to help the poor war sufferers, but I think we can help the cause of liberty by trying to be good Americans. So, therefore, I propose that we settle all differences, bury the hatchet, as it were, of our many opinions, for-

get that we are Girl Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, Girl Pioneers — or members of any organization — and just remember that we are *Americans.* Let us organize into a club for the purpose of becoming *better Americans,* so that we can stand back of our flag, and if we should ever go to war we can help the soldiers who will fight for our liberty and the liberty of those across the sea."

Prolonged applause, that would not be silenced, greeted the speaker. As it dwindled to a few claps and one or two ejaculations of, "Oh, Jude, how did you come to think of it?" "I think that just dandy!" and other outbursts of endorsement, Judith felt assured that the idea that had been snowballing itself in her brain for several weeks had indeed met with the hearty sanction of her mates.

"I suggested it to one or two of the girls," supplemented Judith, her pleasure evidenced by her reddening cheeks and gleaming eyes, "and as it met with their approval I just thought I would tell you girls about it. Now I propose that we get things in shape for our organization."

"I nominate Miss Judith Carvel for president!" cried Mae Allyn, springing quickly to her feet.

"I second the nomination," called out Margery.

"Oh, yes, we want Jude for president!" "She's just the right one!" and similar exclamations caused Peggy to jump to her feet crying, "All in favor of

Judith Carvel for president of the new club say Aye!"

And then Judith was bowing in modest confusion to the loud claps and cheers that signified her popularity as the leader of her companions. At this instant Ann Kelly entered the room. "Sure, Miss Judith," she cried, "I looked in every blessed nook and corner but I could not find Miss Rona; the janitor said he thought she had gone home."

"Oh, I just don't believe she has gone home," voiced Peggy, starting up from her seat; "and I for one refuse to have anything to do with the club unless Rona is here."

"I make the motion that we adjourn the meeting and go and look for her," rang out in decided tones from Margery. As the motion was seconded by a score of voices and unanimously carried, the girls trooped towards the door, all but Mae, who sat busily scribbling on the fly-leaf of a book.

"Come on, Mae," said Judith, as she stepped to the side of the girl and laid her hand on her shoulder to include her in the party of searchers.

"Indeed I'm not going," declared that young lady with some asperity. "I don't believe in coaxing people to do things if they don't want to. And then, too, I believe that Rona can't join anyway, for I heard —"

"Never mind what you heard," laughed Judith as her hand closed over Mae's mouth. Then putting her arm around her waist she pulled her to her feet, and

with a strong propelling movement swept her on towards the door.

A second later they had become part of the merry crowd of girls, who, with Peggy at their head, had broken into a loud "who-who-ing," mingled with many queer sounding calls as they peeped into one deserted schoolroom after the other. Suddenly Peggy broke into one of the school calls:

"One and all,
Call! Call! Call!
Reval Hall!"

This was the signal for many to join in, while another faction followed suit by answering,

"Hear! Hear! Hear!
Cheer! Cheer! Cheer!
Reval, dear!"

The girls, firm in the belief that all pupils as well as the teachers had departed, as it was long after the hour of three, transgressed all rules as to decorum and pitch of voice and chorused this two-part call with unseemly vigor. Suddenly the door of Madame Reval's office was flung wide, and that lady, in attitude and manner that chilled every heart in sudden apprehension, confronted them.



CHAPTER II

AMERICA'S DAUGHTER

AN ominous silence, and then in frigid tones came, "Young ladies, why this unseemly hilarity and racket in the hall?"

The second silence would have proved more portentous than the first, as the girls stared at each other in stupid bewilderment, if one or two of the party had not suddenly sensed that their calm, well-poised model of correctness and culture had smeared her nose — of the Duke of Wellington type — with a long black smudge that leered at them impishly, as if in derision of the impressive dignity of the owner of the nose. A smile quivered into their eyes, while Poco giggled outright.

But Peggy, with a quickness typical of that damsel in fearsome moments, seeing that the atmosphere boded dire disaster,— with that featured smudge,— drawing down the corners of her mouth in dimpling curves, sidled up to the irate dame. With demure eyes and saint-like voice she explained the cause of the undue levity.

With guileless emphasis she not only conveyed the demand for the presence of the missing one, but dwelt

upon the great loss it would be to her if she missed being a charter member of a club with such high aims. A few words from the others in confirmation of their companion's pleas, a parting word of admonition to be more quiet, and then a wave of the hand, a "get-out benediction," as the girls had come to call Madame's brief and perfunctory dismissals, and the door was closed. With long-drawn sighs of relief, but with mouse-like decorousness, although their eyes gleamed merrily, the girls tiptoed up the stairs to the library above, where some one had suggested that Rona might be found.

As the clatter of ascending footsteps on the stone stairway resounded through the corridor, the door of a large wardrobe in the rear of the hall opened, and Rona peered cautiously out. Assured that the coast was clear, with an amused smile dimpling the corners of her mouth, she sallied forth into the adjoining room.

"What ninnies they were," she soliloquized with a gleeful ripple of merriment, "not to think of looking in that old wardrobe, and Peggy, too, who is usually so keen-witted."

As she seated herself at a desk and lifted the lid, preparatory to a general desk-cleaning, the dimpling mouth relaxed, while a wistful expression crept into her brown eyes. "O dear, it is too mean," she said regretfully to herself. "I did want to join that club, but if I did I should have to tell — Oh, I should hate

to do that! Goodness knows it is bad enough, but some of the girls might think — Oh, well,"— she straightened up determinedly, " I shall have to play the glad game and reason myself into the belief that it is best for me to stick to my studies."

She took out a couple of books and was about to pull down the desk-cover when her eyes widened. She listened a moment, and then rose to her feet, glancing helplessly about. Suddenly her eyes sparkled as she cried in an undertone: " No, they shall not find me. I'll squeeze under that big desk."

But lackaday! the door of the room had already opened, and two blue eyes surmounted by fluffy yellow hair peered in. A loud " Oh, honey girl, I've got you sure this time! " rang out in jubilant tones. Then the big door swung wide with a loud bang as the party of searchers rushed helter-skelter, in a wild stampede into the room, and a second later had surrounded the young girl, as they all joyously shrilled, " Oh, we've got you now, young lady, sure and fast! "

And Rona found that she was indeed sure and fast, as the girls swayed in a circle of clasped hands around her, all laughing gleefully. But in a moment, breathless, they came to a halt, while Peggy, shaking her finger at the culprit cried: " Oh, you sinner, why did you give us such a chase? You came very near getting us into an awful scrape, for Madame was in her office, and —"

"She fairly sizzled with wrath," broke in Margery with a reminiscent grin, "as she demanded, 'Young ladies, why this unseemly hilarity and racket in the hall?'" Margery's mimicry of Madame's tone and manner was so cleverly parodied that more laughter followed.

"And, Rona," chimed in the irrepressible Poco, "Madame had a long black smudge on her nose, and —"

"But Peggy saved the day," interposed Mae, "as she usually does by her sweet-simplicity act." And then the girls pressed close about Rona as they begged her to tell them how she had escaped them.

"Why, goosies, I was hidden in the wardrobe in the hall," Rona smiled provokingly. "Oh, you girls were slow not to think of looking there!"

The girls looked blankly at one another, and then good-naturedly laughed at their own stupidity, while Judith demanded plaintively, "But why did you hide from us, Rona? You know I told you we were going to organize the club."

"Yes, I know," replied Rona, the dancing lights in her eyes fading suddenly, "but I don't think I can join — for I have so many studies —"

"Not join?" echoed a chorus of dismayed voices, while Peggy shrilled indignantly: "Why, the idea, Rona Hillis! What do you mean?"

"Oh, Rona, we don't want a club unless you can be-

long to it," and Margery threw her arm around her friend.

But Peggy, with determination blazing in her eyes, caught Rona's hand as she cried, "Now, see here, young lady, you are fencing, for there's something behind all this running away."

"Oh, girls, don't waste time coaxing Rona," interposed Judith at this point, "for she has just *got* to join. Come, let's get down to business."

But Judith's admonition only served as a reminder to the girls, and first one and then another broke out with, "Oh, Rona, we have organized a club, and —"

"And Judith has been elected president!"

But this interesting information was suddenly silenced as the aforementioned president rapped smartly on the desk with her gavel — a wooden ruler lying handy — and in her most official tone and manner cried, "Girls, take your seats; the meeting is called to order."

After a few words of explanation to Rona as to the details of the organization, Judith suggested that a secretary be appointed.

At this Peggy, who loved to create a surprise, quickly arose, and with a wicked little twinkle in her eyes cried, "I propose Mae Allyn for secretary."

This motion was seconded amid a flurry of laughter at Peggy's unique way of getting back at Mae, and as it was soon voted, followed by the election of Mar-

gery Heath for treasurer, the two girls, with the proper equipment for their respective offices, presented themselves at the front of the room for their duties.

"I think the first thing to do," suggested the president, "is to give ourselves a name. Has any one a name to suggest?"

Poco, who had been a quiet listener up to this point, now expressed her opinion by suggesting that the club be called—The Daughters of America. As this name met with popular approval it was soon entered on the minutes:

"Whereas, believing it desirable that a body of schoolgirls organize themselves into a club for the purpose of becoming better Americans, so as to uphold the principles for which our nation stands, of liberty, humanity, and civilization for all, it has been unanimously voted that such club shall be known by the name of 'The Daughters of America.'"

This all-important matter disposed of, Judith was about to proceed to further business when Mae rose and suggested that as the club had been organized for the purpose of making better Americans, that she thought that no one should become a member who had not had a Founder or a patriot for an ancestor.

The silence that followed this suggestion would have been impressive if Poco hadn't tittered. Whereupon the atmosphere cleared of its tenseness, and the girls all indignantly began to voice their protests.

Mae, who was unduly enthusiastic on the subject of pedigree as a member of the patriotic organization known as The Little Men and Women of '76, seeing that she had made a false move, blushed furiously. Determined, however, to hold her own, she tossed her head airily and began to mutter that of course she knew the membership would be limited, but —

But her remarks were lost as Margery jumped to her feet crying: "Well, if one's claim to membership in this club is to be merely a matter of ancestry, nixie for me. My parents," the girl's eyes twinkled, although her face was stolidly composed, "are able to claim direct descent from that old reprobate Adam, but as they have never been able to discover any blue-blooded kings or queens in the family, I should be too plebeian to join."

General laughter followed this sally, and the faces of those who had been most vehement in their protests had begun to clear, when Judith, with a distressed face, seeing the storm that had been evoked, cried: "Oh, girls, what's the use of bringing ancestry into it? It is the American spirit we need."

Mae, in answer to this challenge, was on her feet. "But, Judith," she protested, "surely one cannot have the American spirit unless one is a real American. My ancestors," she reddened slightly, as she heard a near-by girl titter, "not only helped to settle this land, enduring great hardship and deprivation in order to

do it, but their grandsons and great-grandsons fought for the principles they had implanted, and made it a nation. Therefore I consider this land mine by right of heritage, and so am a real American, and can the better understand its principles, its traditions, and all the things that have made it great."

"I don't know about that, Mae," came suddenly from Poco, as she popped up her curly black head. "When it comes to being a real American," she tenderly caressed the Pocahontas bump, "there are only a few in this country, for the Indians were the only real ones."

"I beg leave to differ with you on that point,"—Peggy was up in arms,—"for we do not know that the Indians were Americans. True, they were here when the settlers came, but there is nothing to prove that they did not originally come from Asia, by way of the Behring Sea. I agree with Mae that the men and women who crossed the ocean, and not only settled the land, but fought for it, have the best right to be called Americans."

Poco, seeing that Peggy had won out in the discussion, got up and bobbed her a curtsey as she exclaimed, "I take off my hat to you, lady, for I stand corrected." Then she added, with a roguish gleam in her black eyes, "As far as I am concerned, I don't care who join the club as long as they can speak English as she is spoke."

Merry laughter followed this democratic declaration, coming as it did from one who claimed blood royal, and then Peggy again was heard. "Of course," proclaimed that young lady, "I agree with Marge that it is all nonsense about having to have royalty or a Bunker Hill hero in the family in order to join, but still I do think that one should have at least two generations of American blood in her veins before she can become a better American."

"Perhaps in a way, Peggy, you and Mae are right," observed Judith thoughtfully, who made it a rule to try to look on both sides of a question, "for the descendants of the men and women who were so heroic, and who strove so hard to do right, certainly should have a deeper feeling for things American, and yet it seems to me that any one can have the American spirit who is loyal to the principles and institutions of the country."

"Do you mean then," cried Margery hotly, "that no one can have the American spirit but those who have the blood?"

"Oh, no, indeed," cried Judith warmly, who feared another clash. "I think that Peggy means, as I do, that any one can have the American spirit, only perhaps those who claim it is theirs by heritage, as Mae said, may be more interested in its early history, and so on."

"Well, I tell you what I think," exclaimed Mae

vehemently, "and that is that lots of people with just a little American blood in their veins — or who are Americans just because they have been naturalized — don't care a thing about the founders of this nation; the words 'patriots' and 'principles' are meaningless to them. All they care about is to make money, to have their automobiles, to go to the movies, and all that. Why, some of them don't even care enough about the country to fight for it, and yet they are called Americans. Oh, I think it is just terrible!" The girl's voice was quivering with indignation.

"Yes, they are Americans in a way, I presume," commented Peggy, "but it seems to me that the ones who have the American blood in their veins should make better Americans."

"I think you girls are all right," spoke up Judith, "and yet you must remember what Miss Marston said about America being the melting-pot of the world, because so many people come here to live — all kinds of people, and all nationalities, as you know. It is true, as Mae said, they don't know about our grand principles, our founders, and so on; it is just Dutch to them. They have come here to enjoy the good things of life because there is more opportunity to do so in this great land of liberty. And away down in their hearts they love liberty, for it is something that comes to us from God, and I believe they all want to be true Americans."

"And I think," cried Betty, who had been listening with big, interested eyes to this discussion, "that these people feel awfully hurt if you say they are not Americans. And so it seems to me we can become better Americans by just trying to live the principles of this liberty in our own lives, and then to help others to live them, too." But the girls were applauding the little Bird of Peace so vigorously that she suddenly sat down with a very red, frightened face.

And then Peggy, who was like the pendulum of a clock, forever swinging from one side to another, was crying, "I make the motion that any girl born in America be eligible for membership in this club!"

Margery, who had been listening with animated interest to the many speeches, immediately sprang up crying, "I second the motion!"

She was greeted with loud murmurs of approval, and then as Judith stood waiting for more suggestions, she suddenly spied Rona, who had been sitting very quiet and somewhat pale listening with absorbed attention to the debate. "Why, Rona," she exclaimed with sudden surprise, "I believe you haven't had a word to say. Now tell us what you think?"

Rona, startled by this unexpected address, caught her breath quickly, and then with an upward thrust of her chin, as if an all-important moment had come, stood on her feet.

In a firm voice, although she was digging her finger

nails into the palms of her hands to preserve her poise, she said: "Girls, I told you I could not join the club on account of time, but there's another reason." She swallowed hurriedly. "I do not know that I am an American. I was found when a baby in the courtyard of Mrs. Hillis's house. The only thing to identify me was this little ring." She lifted a fine gold chain worn around her neck, and held up a tiny gold ring attached to it. "On this ring was the name, 'Rowena Doane'!

"Mr. Hillis," continued the girl, "was not successful in tracing my parents, but he has always treated me with the greatest kindness, for he immediately took me into his home, and there I have lived ever since. I should love to be one of you, but for all I know"— the girl shrugged her shoulders with attempted nonchalance—"I may be Irish, Scotch,— who knows but that I may be a German! Yes, I have never known a mother." Rona's eyes filled, but she winked her lashes quickly. "I am nobody's daughter." Then the resolute chin was lifted again as she continued in a more even tone, "But I am inclined to agree with the suggestion that at least one generation of American blood should be required for membership in the club." With a sudden relaxing of her taut muscles the girl sat down.

There was a dismayed silence for a moment, and then Miss Peggy was on her feet. "Did you say,

Rona, that you were a baby when found in Mr. Hillis's courtyard?"

The girl nodded silently.

"And that the name on the ring was Rowena Doane?"

Another affirmative nod.

"Well, then," declared Peggy, with a triumphant ring to her voice, "if you were a baby when found you must have been born in this country, and if the name was Rowena Doane,— that is either Scotch or English,— then you must come of American parents. And if you say you are nobody's daughter," there was an intimation of a grand climax coming in the girl's voice, "why, to make that all right, we will give you a mother — and a good one, too — and call you *America's Daughter.*"

CHAPTER III

A TRUE AMERICAN

A SUDDEN, glad light flooded Rona's eyes, but before she could speak the girls had broken forth into loud cheers of approbation, their eyes all afire, and their hands beating a vigorous "Clap! Clap!" in appreciation of Peggy's clever way of settling Rona's objection that she could not be a member of the club.

"Hurah for Peggy!" "Ha! Ha! Rona, now you have got to be a member!" and many similar exclamations mingled with the applause. Suddenly Poco was crying, "Girls, three cheers for America's Daughter!"

And three cheers it was, with such rousing good cheer and energetic enthusiasm that Rona, whose face was like the "red, red rose," suddenly realized that she had no further need to doubt her comrades' hearty endorsement of Peggy's decision.

"Speech! Speech!" one or two called, which further increased the girl's embarrassment, but she quickly responded: "Girls, I can't make a speech, but — I —" her voice deserted her for a moment, "can — thank you — for your good will and good wishes —

for now I know you appreciate my position, and — how I felt about it. All I can say is that I shall accept your kind invitation to be one of you —" and then with shining, resolute eyes, she added, "and I hope you will never be ashamed of America's Daughter."

As quiet again reigned, Rona's eyes suddenly widened, and she leaned forward and peered across the room for a moment. Then she was on her feet murmuring, "Oh, the little Joy Girl is crying!"

Yes, little Ann Kelly's face was hidden on her elbow as it lay on her desk, while her shoulders heaved convulsively. But Rona, who was the first one to see the little maid's woeful condition, was already at her side. "Why, Ann," she questioned in sympathetic impulse, "what makes you cry?" But as Ann raised her flushed and tear-stained face, and attempted to speak, Rona, whose intuitions were keen, had sensed the situation.

"What is it, dear?" she whispered, tenderly stroking the bent head, as the girl, in her effort to hide her face again, ashamed at being found crying in this childish fashion, made no answer. "Is it because you can't join the club?"

It was only a soft little whisper, but Ann heard it, and in a voice choked with emotion whispered, "I am — an — American — even if I wasn't — born here. Why — I just — *love the flag!*" And then

with heaving breast the little Celtic maid drew from her shirt-waist a torn and faded bit of cloth. It was the United States flag.

Rona's eyes were dim. Oh, what could she say to comfort this little would-be American? For indeed it was true that Ann had been born in Ireland. When a wee babe she had been brought to this country, but, losing her parents shortly after, a kind-hearted Irish lady had taken the orphaned child into her own family, although she already had a baker's dozen of her own to clothe and feed.

This good woman, being compelled to take the little one with her when working, had one day, while doing chores for Madame Reval, given Ann an old tin pan and a spoon to amuse herself, while she scrubbed the floor. Attracted by the racket, a bevy of schoolgirls had found the little one having a real joy time in her efforts to make the pan resound to her feebly directed blows.

The girls succumbed to Ann's dimpling smile and roguish eyes, and after innumerable kisses and hugs, an inquiry was started to ascertain to whom she belonged. Having learned her sad story and the kindness of her benefactress, Mrs. McGuire, they had clubbed together and given her a good round sum to help her in her endeavors to do for the motherless one.

The interest in Ann had not only grown, but it had finally resolved itself into a stated income contributed

by the pupils of Reval Hall towards the support of the child, who became known as the school's mascot. To be sure, these things had happened when the present Daughters of America were in the kindergarten, but the fund had continued, and also the love, for Ann was appareled like a young princess, as nothing pleased her young mothers more than to give to her.

Madame, perceiving that looking after the young charge was bringing out the best in her pupils, finally took the little girl into her own household. Here her merry ways and sunny disposition, for her eyes were like wells of joy, soon gained her the nickname of the Joy Girl.

For a moment Rona was in a quandary, as it would not do to hurt the tender little heart of this Irish lassie, who indeed must possess the real American spirit. Suddenly her eyes brightened. "Girls," she cried hastily, "we have forgotten little Ann."

Freed from the onerous duties of organization for a few moments, as they were all chatting merrily when Rona spoke, the girls stared at her with mild interest, not altogether comprehending what had caused the disturbance. Peggy, however, immediately replied, "Oh, no, indeed, we must not forget the Joy Girl."

"If I am not mistaken," went on Rona, "Judith said it was not so much ancestry as it was the American spirit that was needed to make an American. I

think the Joy Girl has proved this, for oh, girls, although not born on these shores, she is such a true American that she carries the flag next to her heart!" Rona held up the torn and faded bit of flag that Ann was attempting to clutch, as if fearful that some one would take it from her.

Rona's mind had acted quickly, and as she stood close beside Ann, who was rubbing her eyes with a beteared handkerchief, she turned to Judith and asked, "Miss President, may I make a motion?"

In answer to a nod of acknowledgment Rona hastily inquired if there were any girls in the room who were not native-born Americans. Three or four girls arose in shame-faced fashion, among them Felice Delatour, a French girl who had recently entered the school.

"Would you girls like to join the club?" questioned Rona.

"Oh, yes," nodded Felice, while the eyes of the other girls brightened, "but you have voted that no one can become a member who is not American-born, and of course that puts us out."

For a moment Rona hesitated, and then, with eyes curiously aglow, she faced the young president, crying, "Jude, did not some one say we could become better Americans by trying to live the principles of liberty ourselves, and then by helping others to live them?"

Judith nodded silently, her eyes curiously alert.

"Well then, girls, here's our chance! First, let's give three cheers for a true American, little Ann Kelly!" Rona's hand swept upward as she led the cheers that a moment later so heartily resounded through the room. As the tumult subsided, with the glow in her eyes deepening, she again faced Judith. "Please, Miss President, I make the motion that all those who are not American-born, but who want to be Americans, be enrolled as probation members of the club for one year; and if, at the end of that time, they have shown that they have the American spirit, that they be admitted as members."

A moment's pause, and then Peggy and Margery were both on their feet to second the motion. As there was no discussion the matter was soon settled, to the delight of the Joy Girl, who, with her eyes like stars and the torn bit of flag still in her hand, a moment later stood and received the congratulations of the girls.

As the girls again took their seats, the Joy Girl still clinging to Rona's hand, Judith suggested that the many ways by which one could become better Americans should be definitely stated.

"One way is by giving due reverence to the Stars and Stripes!" broke from Mae, who in her patriotic fervor, again forgot that, as the club's secretary, she was the recorder of its laws and not a proposer.

"By trying, as Betty said, to live in our own lives, the principles behind our flag," cried Poco, "and then by helping others to live them."

"By giving due reverence to the pioneers of the nation," cried Margery animatedly,—"the women who taught us the principles we are so proud of — and the men," she added hurriedly, with some confusion.

There was general laughter at this suggestion, which made the bright coloring in the girl's freckled face deepen, while a hurt look crept into her blue-gray eyes, which made Rona spring to her feet and cry half laughingly: "Oh, we weren't laughing at you, Margery, but because, in your anxiety to honor the pioneer women, you came very near leaving the poor men out altogether. Of course," she added, with a more serious expression, "we must give due reverence to the pioneers, the Founders and patriots, for they gave us a nation."

Margery's face cleared, and then she explained somewhat apologetically: "Oh, well, you girls all know I am a Girl Pioneer of America, and that its aims are to teach girls to cultivate the sterling qualities of the pioneer women. And, girls," she added with glowing eyes, "these virtues are so big,— as courage, resourcefulness, uprightness, and so on,— and there are so many old-time crafts to learn about, and we do have such good times on our hikes that — well, I am very apt to forget all about the men pioneers." There

was a twinkle in the girl's gray-blue eyes as she sat down.

"Apologies accepted," called out several voices laughingly, for every one liked this girl with her well-developed physique, her sensible face, and her worth-while ways. She was not only esteemed for her honest sincerity, but was considered an acquisition to the school as being a lover of nature and outdoor sports. Upon more than one occasion she had proved most efficient by her skillful aid in an emergency or accident.

"I think we should not only study the founders of the nation," advised Rona, "but all those Americans who have helped in any way — no matter when they were born — by their labors and ability to make famous its arts, science, and literature."

"Agreed," called out Poco, "which means that we ought to make a special study of American history, so that we shall learn more about the lives of these great Americans."

Mae, fired by these many suggestions, quickly recorded them in her little red book, while thinking with pleasurable pride that she was so glad that she had learned the duties of secretary in Little Men and Women of '76.

The last motion had just been recorded when a faint, hesitating voice was heard. It came from Betty Bird, a girl whose fawn-colored hair, smoothly

parted, Madonna-wise in the center, and whose thickly lashed eyes, with a sweet seriousness in their blue, added a quaintness and charm to an otherwise insignificant face. A trustful, peaceful disposition, added to thought and care for others, had gained her the name of Bird of Peace.

"As each of you girls has spoken about her club, I thought I would — like — to tell you —" Betty was swallowing hard —"about mine."

"Hear! Hear!" shouted some one loudly, whereupon Judith cried: "Oh, yes, Betty; tell us about your club, for you are a Queen Esther girl, are you not?" Judith smiled encouragingly upon the timid little maid with the gentle eyes and voice, and, as Miss Marston had said once, when Judith smiled it always meant the sunshine of encouragement.

"Oh, Judith was a dear?" thought the relieved Betty. "Yes, it is a religious organization; it belongs to the Methodist Episcopal church. It's just a band of girls, you know. We meet to try to be — good — and — to help others to be good by raising money for the missionaries. Our motto is," went on the little Court lady, forgetting her shyness in her enthusiasm, "For Love of Christ and — in His name — to win America first.

"And so," stammered the girl, squaring her shoulders with the determination not to be frightened, "I think that we should all strive to be good Christians

first, so as to win America for Christ, by helping people to love God, and then their country." Betty sat down rather hurriedly, suddenly aroused to the thought that girls don't like to be preached at.

"Well, I think Betty is right," suddenly agreed Peggy, who was greatly interested, "the Girl Scout organization teaches the same thing, for every girl when she becomes a Scout has to make the promise:

"On My Honor, I Will Try
To do my duty to God and my country,
To help other people at all times,
To obey the Scout Law."

That means that service to God comes first, and then service to one's country. So I make the motion that we begin right now, and appoint a chaplain to this club, and begin every meeting with a prayer. It can be short, only let's have it."

There was silence for a moment, and then Rona, with sudden gravity cried, "I second the motion!"

The motion had barely been carried when another voice was heard. "I make the motion that we elect Betty Bird chaplain, and — well, let her do the praying for us, for the Lord knows," ended Peggy piously, "I guess we all need it."

This motion was seconded so quickly that poor Betty, in her surprise and horror at the very suggestion of her standing up there and making a prayer, before all those girls, was ready to collapse.

But no, she must not go back on what she had said, although she had not progressed as far as that in her plan of America first. But still — O dear, must she make a prayer? Betty glanced helplessly around, every head was bent forward — but every eye was on her. They were waiting for that prayer.

A despairing little cry went up from the girl's heart, and then she seemed to hear the old familiar motto softly whispered, "For Love of Christ!" Ah, here was her chance to show the girls that she was in earnest. A sudden light shone in the mild blue eyes, the quaint, demure face became almost transfigured, and then slowly, falteringly, but clearly, Betty was heard saying, "Dear Jesus, please help us to be good — so we can win America to Christ, and be — better Americans."

There was a moment's hush, and then like a benediction several softly-spoken "Amens!" sounded through the room.

Judith, in a voice that trembled slightly in an endeavor to break the solemn stillness that pervaded the room, cried, "Now, girls, you have all told your ideas about how we can become better Americans, so I am going to tell you one that has haunted me ever since I began to think about the club.

"I am a Camp Fire Girl, as you know, and one of their laws is 'To give service.' Now it seems to me, in order to become better Americans, we should

be willing and ready to give service. I cannot tell you what kind, girls," continued the young president earnestly, "for that is something each of you will have to decide for herself, for I know that each one of us, if we should ever go to war, would want to do her bit, no matter how small, towards helping our country. It might be —" Judith drew in her breath sharply, as if to get an unpleasant ordeal over —"that the service would be — well — to give up our brothers and send them across the sea to help win this dreadful war."

Like a bomb that had suddenly exploded in their midst, noiselessly perhaps, and yet a bomb, a sudden fear crept into the girls' eyes as they stared blankly at one another. To their unthinking minds, with the supreme confidence that America was invulnerable, war was a vague thing, a far-away evil, to be read about and discussed, but never to come near. This great republic, with its vast wealth, its millions of people, its wonderful inventions, its economic prosperity, its brave boys with their Yankee grit — why, war seemed an impossible thing!

But somehow these words of Judith's were ripe with premonitions, dreaded whisperings of an unknown evil, the sudden fear that the "land of the free and the home of the brave" might not, after all, be the impregnable, armor-sheeted thing they had believed it to be.

At this instant a new voice, low, but clear, with an undercurrent of sadness in its sweetness, exclaimed, "Oh, pardon me, mademoiselles, but — may I intrude upon — you? I'm — so sorry — but I left a book in — my desk."

As the voice rang mournfully through the room every face turned toward the speaker, a young girl standing in the doorway, holding in her arms a small black dog whose shining, satiny coat accentuated with startling contrast the soft, clinging folds of a white gown that hid the slender young figure.

From beneath the drooping brim of a white hat circled with fluffy white feathers, dark eyes looked forth sorrowfully, with a dulled brightness, as if misted with tears that could not be repressed. And yet it was the face of youth, but pain-lined and shadowed, with the olive skin whitened with a graying pallor, and the fine, sensitive mouth drooping pathetically at the corners, as the girl stared with questioning eyes at Judith, who was gazing at the intruder in silent surprise.

"Oh, it's the Wailing Princess!" whispered Peggy with a sudden clutch at Rona's arm. "O dear! I do hope she isn't going to shed an ocean of tears — now, of all times."

But Rona was already on her feet, crying, "Oh, Miss Briedel, will you not join us? Here is a seat over by the window."

Before the Belgian girl, or the Wailing Princess, as Peggy had designated her,— for her weeping proclivities,— could respond to their invitation, Judith had slipped from behind the desk, and, after a breezy little nod of welcome, escorted the girl to the designated seat.

The little black dog, however, forestalling all invitations, had already leaped from the arms of his young mistress and trotted to the open window. Here he posed with his hind legs on the cushion of the window-seat, and his paws on the ledge, while staring with his bright, shoe-button eyes at a bird, whose low twitter was clearly heard as it nested in the bough of a tree in the garden.

Interest was paramount as the young Belgian girl, in mild distress, again murmured her apologies for interrupting them. But alas, she had left a much-needed book and had returned for it, she explained pleadingly in her Belgian-English, as the girls called the slight hesitancy between the syllables, that added a strange but pleasing attraction to her speech.

Oh, yes, it gave her much pleasure to see the happy faces of the young ladies, for — her eyes saddened,— her own heart was so full of grief; but at this moment the little dog, Skipperee, spying an avowed enemy, the kitchen cat, creeping stealthily along the stone wall, had given a short, loud bark. The next instant, like

a black ball, he was flying through the window in hot pursuit.

"Oh — the bad — bad — dog. He make me so much trouble! What shall I do?" smote with wailing emphasis on the ears of the girls. "Sure, she is going to weep; didn't I tell you?" murmured Miss Peggy to Rona, as the aggrieved voice of Miss Briedel rose in threatened crescendo towards the anticipated wail.

Peggy's bark was like the proverbial one, notwithstanding her lament, and the next moment, in impulsive sympathy, she was at the side of the reputed wailer.

"Oh, don't cry," she soothed, patting the girl's shoulder in kindly consolation. "I will get him for you!" And then, before the Belgian could protest, Peggy seated herself on the window ledge. Up went two tiny slippered feet; a sudden twirl to the left, and they had dropped through space to the green sward below. Just a flash of time and they were twinkling like black dots between their owner's skirts as she sped swiftly down the path after Skipperee.

CHAPTER IV

THE WAILING PRINCESS

AMID the wild cheers of her companions, who had crowded to the window to see the sport, Peggy captured the runaway. While snuggling him close — he was a dear old doggie —she was flying back up the path, her yellow hair and blue eyes not only bright with their natural tints, but with the gold of the spring sunshine as it glinted between the newly budded leaves of the trees.

The surprised pleasure that shone from Miss Briedel's mournful eyes more than repaid Peggy for her efforts, and possibly made that young lady wish that she had not been so premature in dubbing her the Wailing Princess.

As the girls flocked about, Miss Briedel explained her fondness for the little black dog by saying that she had found him keeping guard over the body of a dead French soldier, on the outskirts of a wood near a battlefield in France. "He was so grateful," she continued, as she softly stroked his shining coat, "when I gave him part of my morning meal — which had been given to me by an old peasant woman — that he

licked my hand and face. It seemed cruel to leave him there beside his dead comrade, and finally, after much persuasion, I got him away. A soldier at Aire said he was a canal-dog of a breed whose lives are spent on canal-boats." This little page from the life-history of Skipperee caused the girls' hearts to warm towards him, and from that time he shared with the Joy Girl the honor of being the school mascot.

Isadore Briedel was a Belgian refugee, a protégée of Miss Hector, a wealthy society lady, prominently active in Belgian relief work. Her case, although only one of the many tragedies that had been enacted during the present war, was so marvelously thrilling — the girl had been separated from her mother when fleeing from her home to escape the Germans — that it had made more than the usual appeal to her benefactress. Perhaps it was the fact that the young girl was refined, educated, and accustomed to the luxuries of the *noblesse riche,* as well as her somber beauty and the pathetic sweetness of her young voice, that had caused the good lady to take her into her own household.

Here Isadore not only received food, clothing, and shelter, but she became a pupil of one of Brooklyn's well-known schools. It was evidently the wish of her benefactress to alleviate if possible the pall of sorrow that enveloped the girl, by placing her among those of her own age.

But once among the happy, rollicking girls, she was

so struck with the contrast between her own sorrow-laden life and their care-free one, that she would fall to weeping and indulge in long spells of grief from which nothing seemed to rouse her. Alas, her mind had reverted to the hardships, the anxieties, and the harrowing experiences through which she had just passed.

The buoyancy and joyousness of youth, ever prone to shun grief, perhaps not so much from stoniness of heart as from the shyness of coming in contact with an unknown condition, had caused the inmates of Reval Hall to avoid the weeping Belgian. Possibly they feared that she would repel their advances, thinking it an intrusion on her grief — all but Mae.

And that young lady, who was quality from the crown of her velvet-banded tresses to the soles of her dainty little white boots, as soon as it was intimated that Miss Briedel belonged to the *vraie noblesse,* attempted to fraternize with her.

But all her attempts had failed, for this daughter of a desolated nation was in too shattered a condition to respond to Mae's overtures. She apparently failed to see that beneath the girl's artificiality she possessed virtues that in time would soften the ephemeral faults of a girlhood nurtured in the soulless atmosphere of a home where the mother's sole aim was to figure as the leader of an exclusive circle.

As the girls settled down to quietness, Judith, with

her winning smile, asked the Belgian if she would not like to join them, and then in a few words she explained the object of the gathering.

The girl's eyes widened with a sudden gleam of interest as she slowly repeated, "Better Americans!" Then she added hastily, "Oh, young ladies, you have chosen a noble aim — you, the daughters of a great nation! Ah, I wish I could join with you," her eyes gleamed wistfully, "that *I* too, could be an American, for alas,—" her chin quivered,—"I have no nation."

The tears misted her eyes, but with a convulsive little struggle she went on slowly, with a sweet pathos that touched every heart: "Oh, if you could but understand,— could comprehend what it means to know that your birthland is a blackened ruin, to know the havoc that has come to ancient fortresses, to beautiful cathedrals and palaces, to great buildings of learning and to works of art, and then to realize that you are nationless, an alien in a strange land, with no one belonging to you." The girl covered her eyes with her hand as if ashamed of a grief that threatened to overwhelm her.

Judith, with dim eyes, stepped quickly to the girl's side, and in a choking voice cried: "Oh, Miss Briedel, we are all so sorry for you; we understand how you must feel and suffer. But, Miss Briedel, we are proud of your little nation, proud of your brave King Albert, of your courageous soldiers, yes, and of your oppressed

people, who have so nobly striven to defend your country."

"And, Miss Briedel," added Rona, earnestly, who had impulsively placed herself by the side of Judith, "you must remember that your little nation is going to win, because you see you haven't done any wrong, and I know God won't let you suffer,— that is, not for long. For when the war is over there won't be any nation so great as yours, for when you refused to allow those terrible German soldiers to go through your land, you were not only defending the honor of your country, but of every country in the world; and then, you know, you saved France!"

"Ah, you have given me hope." The girl's eyes brightened. She rose, and impulsively holding out her hands, gave one to Judith and the other to Rona as she added warmly: "I feel — your great sympathy. I am — so glad — to know you kind-hearted American girls."

And then she sank back in her seat, as the young president, perceiving that the atmosphere threatened hysteria from overcharged sympathy, returned to her seat. She had barely reached it, however, when Rona, as if suddenly impelled by a new thought, swung about, and with her eyes all aflame, cried: "Oh, girls! We want to become better Americans. Miss Briedel says she would like to be an American. Let us show her

how to be one. I make the motion that we elect Miss Briedel a probation member of the club."

This motion was enthusiastically received by the girls, and in a few minutes it was on record. And then Margery proposed the names of Madame Reval and Miss Marston, their history teacher, known as the Best Beloved, as honorary members of the club.

Rona's name was suggested for the office of vice-president, but she quickly declined the honor, claiming that she wanted to show that she was a true American first. The matter of dues and meetings was soon disposed of, it being decided that the club meet every week to discuss American history and do some kind of patriotic work. At this point the Belgian mournfully held up a long gray stocking, and with moist eyes timidly asked if they would not make the knitting of warm stockings for the poor soldiers part of their patriotic work.

This was immediately assented to, each girl being requested to appear at the next meeting with wool and needles, Judith declaring to the would-be slackers that she herself would teach them this grandmother's art if they did not know it.

It was further decided that they hold a patriotic celebration on Flag Day, when each member would be required to render some service, or give some kind of a demonstration to show that she possessed the

American spirit. If any one would write a play, or compose a poem or a class song, it would be appreciated, as of course all talent would have to be furnished by the Daughters, the proceeds from their efforts to be given to the Red Cross.

As it was growing late the meeting was adjourned, and those who had suddenly bethought themselves of the studies for to-morrow hastened homeward, while a few lingered for a chat over the momentous events of the afternoon. As Rona stood surrounded by a group of her mates, she glanced up to see the refugee, with Skipperee in her arms, standing forlornly by the window watching them, with a sad, wistful expression on her face.

Quickly excusing herself to her companions the girl hastened to her side. "Oh, Miss Briedel," she exclaimed cordially, "I am so glad you joined us this afternoon. I am so pleased to know you — that is, to know you better," she floundered laughingly. "I think we have all been at fault in not being more friendly with you, but I am sure it was not because we meant to offend, but we hated to intrude. But now that we have come to know you better, we want to try to make you as happy as we can."

Rona's taking the initiative in making friends with the refugee was the signal for her companions to follow, and presently the Belgian girl was surrounded by a group of merry chatterers, each one apparently bent

on making up for the aloofness of the past few months.

That their overtures were received in a friendly spirit was evident to Rona, when with pleased surprise she saw that the girl's usually pale cheeks had flushed to a delicate pink, and that her eyes glowed with a strange light, as if her sorrow for the time at least had been forgotten.

As the three girls, Judith, Rona, and Isadore, strolled homeward Judith expressed her pleasure that Rona had become a member of the club. "But, Rona," she continued in a slightly aggrieved tone, "why did you not let us know before that you were not Mr. Hillis's daughter?"

"Perhaps I should have done so," replied Rona quickly, "but Maggie — she is Mr. Hillis's servant, the one who found me — has always cautioned me not to tell it. Then, too, perhaps I was cowardly enough to fear that if the girls knew the truth they might not want to be friends with me."

And then, led on by her companion's questioning, Rona told how, one cold morning, Maggie had found her wrapped in some brown stuff lying near the ash-barrel in the courtyard crying. She continued: "Of course no one knew what to do with me but Maggie; she gave me some milk. She said I was about a year old.

"When it was suggested by the other servants that I be sent to the police station, Maggie strenuously ob-

jected. She told me that everything about me showed that I had refined parents, and she could not bear the thought of sending a nice little baby like me to the station-house, only to land later in some terrible institution.

"When Mr. Hillis found how Maggie felt about the matter,— she was an old family servant, having taken care of his wife, who had been a great invalid for many years,— why, I just stayed. Every effort was made to find my parents, however, for when the police failed to discover any clews Mr. Hillis hired a private detective, but nothing ever came of it. The only clew we had was the little ring, and — oh, yes — one of the neighbors, an old lady, declared that she had seen a Chinaman go into the yard carrying a bundle, and then come out again very quickly. Probably she would have forgotten the incident if I had not been found.

"Mr. Hillis has always been very kind to me, but when I was found he was grieving for the loss of his wife and rarely noticed me. Maggie says he doesn't like children. But he has always given Maggie all the money she wants to take care of me, until a few years ago, when he said I must learn to look out for myself.

"Oh, I was so frightened," exclaimed the girl ruefully, "for I thought he meant to turn me out into the street. But he didn't; he just gave me an allow-

ance and told me how to put everything down so as to teach me business methods; and then, too, you know Maggie is getting old, and it was right for me to look out for myself.

"But it was always Maggie who used to tell him what I needed. Oh, she is such a dear, faithful soul. When I was little she used to whip me when I was naughty, and even now I hate to displease her, but of course I have learned to manage her a little. When I was six years old Maggie went to Madame Reval — she had heard of the school through some neighbors — and told her all about me."

"Oh, then Madame knew about you, then?" ejaculated Judith in a surprised tone.

"Oh, yes," replied Rona, "and she has always been very kind to me. I think she has tried to make up to me for not having a mother. Oh, girls," sighed the girl drearily, "you don't know what it means not to have a mother, or any folks of your own,— some one who cares specially for you," the girl's voice had grown tremulous.

She stopped abruptly; a sudden fear had leaped into her eyes. O dear, perhaps she should not have been talking this way when Isadore had met with such a loss. As if to atone for her thoughtlessness she impulsively laid her hand on the girl's arm and pressed it gently, conveying the unspoken sympathy she felt.

"Oh, then you know what — I suffer," broke from

the Belgian girl impetuously as she felt that soft touch; "for I do not know if I have a mother — or not; it is this suspense that makes me weep and act so dreadfully." The girl's eyes had misted and her chin quivered.

Then falteringly, as if impelled by their ready sympathy and the confidence it inspired to unburden one's soul in the presence of mutual sorrow, she went on and told how, when the Germans invaded Belgium, her father, an army officer, was compelled to leave them. He had begged her mother and herself to go with him, — he wanted to get them into Holland,— but her grandmother was very feeble, and her mother would not leave her, so they had remained at their château on the Hannebeck River, near the town of St. Julien. Then came the news of her father's death,— he had been killed in the battle of the Marne,— that the Germans were swarming over the land, and that they were destroying everything in their wild march to reach Paris.

"Then dear grandmother passed to her rest," went on Isadore sadly, with her hesitating, halting English; "but before we could escape we saw from the tower-window the long gray-clad columns, like bands of ribbon, silvered by the glitter of their helmets and the glisten of their bayonets, as the German soldiery swung on and on, a never-ending line of men and munitions, towards St. Julien.

"Oh, you cannot comprehend the fearful terrorism of those days — shut up in the château." The girl closed her eyes as if to shut out the remembrance of the scene. "You cannot imagine the terror of the bomb-dropping *Taubes,* the scream of the shrapnel as they spit against the walls of the buildings, the dull boom of the cannon in the distance, intermingled with the din of tumbling walls and the terrified cries of the fleeing inhabitants, and at times the soft throb of a whizzing aëroplane above our heads. And over all rose a dense, black smoke, mingled with strange gases lighted by spurts of flame, for a part of St. Julien had caught fire."

Then came the story of how Jacques, an old servitor, had hidden them in an underground passageway, known only to him and her father, and how, on the third day, when he had failed to bring them food, they knew that the soldiers had discovered that they were in hiding, and dreaded to think of the nameless fate of the brave old man. How they managed to crawl out of the tunnel on their hands and knees, digging through the fallen earth with their fingers to clear their way, and how they finally stood under the starlight, free but homeless, was quickly told.

After a ceaseless and weary tramp through a forest, to a long road where strings of fleeing refugees struggled stubbornly along with dazed, haunting eyes of despair, they came to a ruined city. Then they pressed

on again to battlefields, once vivid with the bloom of ripening wheat or grain, but now of a grisly brownness, strewed and blackened in patches with the remnants of splintered guns and shells, and with barbed wire lying about, and zigzagged by black-looking shell-holes and dugouts, and rows and rows of mounds, topped with black wooden crosses,— the graves of those who had fallen on a battlefield of heroes.

But at last, with sore and bleeding feet, faint with hunger, fatigue, and lack of sleep, they came to the edge of a shelled, deserted French village, Mont des Cats, where rows of empty peasants' houses seemed to leer at them in mockery of their roofless walls and glassless windows. Here they found, a church, where in the tower, high above the walls scarred with shot, the columns and arches zigzagging and tumbling, gleamed in the mystical splendor of a fading sunset a tiny cross. Its top was shattered, but its arms still stretched outward, as if in a divine benediction, a lure to the weary ones to rest beneath its shelter.

Here Isadore's mother left her asleep to wander forth, evidently in search of food. The girl finally awakened, and, rushing forth, searched frantically for her mother among the splintered tombstones of the old graveyard and on the long village street. Here she was found by an old French peasant woman, the only inhabitant of the village, who claimed that she had given her mother food, and that she had then started

back to the church. Later, she had heard the throb of an automobile, and had looked out of her cellar door to see it whizzing down the road — but her mother was not in sight.

Frantic with despair, Isadore, dazed and ill, had been taken care of by the old woman for several days, and then she had again set out to locate, if possible, the French army. She had gone but a short distance when she stumbled, near the edge of a forest, upon the body of a young French lad, a soldier, who had evidently fallen and died, after a weary struggle seeking help, from his wounds and starvation. Crouching by the twisted, contorted limbs of the stiff form huddled on the blackened sward, Skipperee, a gaunt, fierce-eyed sentry, was keeping vigil.

Isadore, through a haze of tears, described the pallid, noble face of the lad, the blood-stained gray uniform with the number six on each side of the collar, showing that he belonged to the *6ème Territorials.* With an aching heart the girl had hurried back to the old French woman, and then she falteringly told how, a little later, as they were digging his grave, the thought had come to the old peasant of how much safer Isadore would be in her search for the French army, if she would put on the uniform of the dead soldier.

Isadore, horrified, refused, but finally, seeing the wisdom of the suggestion, consented. After they had buried the soldier lad under a mound, knelt by the

little wooden cross and said a prayer, and then sung the Marseillaise, she again set forth on her journey, with her hair tucked up under the dead boy's cap, in the ragged blood-smeared uniform.

It was the same weary plodding over ruined fields and long roads, but Skipperee was at her heels, and she knew this time she was headed in the right direction. With unwearying patience, she said, she had searched among the names marked, in uncouth letters on broken wall or barn door by the refugees, seeking, as she did, the name of a lost one, but it was a fruitless quest. Finally, while doggedly trudging along the Chemin de Bailleul Cassel, she was found by the British patrol and directed to Caestre. Here she was delivered into the charge of the French depot station at Aire. Later, notwithstanding her disguise, it was discovered that she was a girl. On hearing her story, she was taken by a member of the Refugee Committee to Boulogne, and finally sailed for America.

By the time Isadore had finished her sad story they had reached the home of her benefactor, Miss Hector. After assuring the Belgian girl of their deep sympathy for her in her sad loss, with a cordial good-by the two girls hastened on.

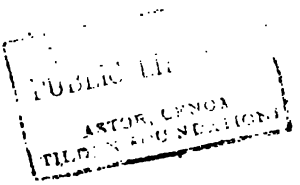
Saddened by Isadore's story, it was a silent walk.

As they reached Rona's house, and Judith glanced up at its cheerless, somber aspect, she cried: "Oh, you poor kiddie! I should think you'd have the indigo



IT WAS THE SAME WEARY PLODDING OVER RUINED FIELDS AND LONG ROADS, BUT SKIPPEREE WAS AT HER HEELS.—*Page 72.*




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blues in that great barn of a house, with only the servants and just — a man for company."

"I do sometimes," replied her companion with a half sigh, "for, as I said before, Mr. Hillis is a very silent, reticent man. Generally we sit through the whole of a dinner without exchanging a word. I often doubt if he remembers I'm in the room. But he is very kind to me, and I could be very fond of him if he cared for me — just a wee bit." The girl's chin quivered slightly.

A vague feeling of reproach that she should not have deserted her patient, which had haunted Rona all day, made itself sharply felt as, after taking off her hat she hurried into Mr. Hillis's room and noticed his tired, glum-looking face.

As Maggie, glad to be relieved, lumbered noisily out of the room, Mr. Hillis, in a tone of repressed impatience, burst out with: "Rona, I shall have to have a nurse. Maggie's a faithful soul, but she's no good. By Jove, if she wasn't squeaking about in those new shoes of hers, she was sitting in that chair staring at me as if I was a wild animal, or an imbecile. And when I dropped my cigar I had to fish for it with my slipper, for she was asleep in her chair, snoring like a porpoise."

"Snoring!" ejaculated Rona, and then she giggled so unrestrainedly as she pictured Maggie with her mouth wide-open — she had seen her asleep — and Mr.

Hillis fishing for his cigar, that that gentleman, in grim appreciation of the humorous side of his grievance, grinned.

"I wanted to stay and nurse you," explained the girl quickly, "but Maggie insisted that I must go to school; it was examination day, you know." Rona flushed slightly, uneasily wondering, if she had not been so anxious to go herself, if she could not have managed to have coaxed Maggie.

"Well, 'phone to the doctor and tell him to send me a nurse — a man nurse; no women nurses for me," disgustedly growled the gentleman.

"All right," answered the girl dazedly. She walked mechanically into the hall and in the direction of the telephone. Oh, it seemed a shame to have to hire a nurse. Mr. Hillis wasn't ill enough for that, and then she could wait on him, if she could manage Maggie. Then came the suggestion: Oh, why bother? You will find it very irksome to be cooped up in the house this lovely weather. And then, too, there will be all the good times you will miss at school, now that the study days are over, and then there's the club.

Rona frowned. O dear! what should she do? Her hand was on the receiver. No, it would not be right. She *could* take care of Mr. Hillis. What if she did lose all the fun? See what she owed — Yes, she would have to manage Maggie, who'd be hurt, but —

she knew she could do it. Rona dropped the receiver and hurried down the stairs to the kitchen. A few minutes later she stood hopelessly defeated. She had used every available plea to induce Maggie to surrender, but without success. "No," she thought with a dreary sigh, "I can't let her know that Mr. Hillis don't want her to nurse him, when she has always been so kind to him and his wife."

Suddenly her eyes sparkled. "See here, Maggie, you are terribly unkind to me." The girl's voice was tense in its gravity. "Here is an opportunity for me to repay Mr. Hillis for his kindness to me — perhaps the only one I shall ever have." There was a wail in the voice, although her eyes, which she kept on the floor, were gleaming.

"Now he thinks I am ungrateful, that I have just taken all of his kindness as a matter of course, when, oh, Maggie! I would do anything in the world to let him know that I do appreciate what he has done." There was a genuine choke in the voice now, for Rona had unconsciously worked herself into a state of tragic realism over a thing that had worried her sensitive nature for some time. "And now you won't let me," she ended dismally as she turned to leave the room.

"Oh, now, Miss Rona, don't take on so. If you feel that way about it, and he'll have a slip of a thing like you wait on him, sure, Maggie won't be that set."

"Oh, Maggie, do you mean it? Oh, you old dear!" There was a hurried rush back from the hall, and then two arms stole around Maggie's neck, as Rona kissed the seamed, leathery cheek.

CHAPTER V

THE LIBERTY LUNCHEON

THE two weeks following Mr. Hillis's accident brought some novel experiences into Rona's life. To be the constant attendant on an active, busy man to whom sickness was a new experience, was not an enviable task for a young girl. Nevertheless Rona had to smile many times, for if Mr. Hillis had forgotten her in the past he was making up for it now, for it was a constant, "Rona, I wish you'd speak to Tom about cleaning that automobile," or, "I hate these slops!" "This toast is burned," and many similar complaints.

It worried the girl when things did not run smoothly, for she felt responsible for her patient's well-being. She was sure she could make better toast than that. Ah, she would have to manage Maggie again; never mind, she would praise her. And she did, so honestly and conscientiously that Maggie beamed complacently and readily allowed her to try her hand at making some "lovely buttered toast" the way one of the girls at school had taught her. The toast proved a successful job, for Maggie not only learned a thing or two in the

process, but the patient ate every bit of it and wanted to know if Rona had hired a new cook.

When the girl falteringly said that she had made it, Mr. Hillis looked somewhat surprised. After this it became the usual thing for Rona to try her hand at one thing and another, until Maggie became aggrieved to think that the toothsome dainties which she had made all her life should be put aside for the folderols of a young girl. But the new plea that some day Rona would have to earn her own living, and would have to know how to do things, had much weight.

But keeping her patient in a good mood by making dainty tid-bits to please his palate was not the only thing the girl learned. She soon realized that time was too fleeting to spend bemoaning the fact that she was deprived of the jolly times with the girls, the Commencement dance, and the many things she had planned to do in the club so as to become a better American.

She attempted to read up on American history, but that grew monotonous, and she became depressed as she gazed out of the window at the beautiful outside world that was calling to her to come and play with it.

She had a sniffle or two in the closet,— her usual wailing-place,— which ended in her feeling ashamed of herself for being so childish, tempered with the feeling that God might punish her if she made big things out of paltry disappointments. For Rona had

been systematically taught by the faithful Maggie — who was a good old Presbyterian, imbued with the Calvinist theory of a God demanding an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth — that if you did wrong you would be punished for it. Many a time she had gone to bed with Maggie's too vivid description of the pit of hell-fire so impressed on her mental vision, that for hours she could see the legs of the bad men sticking up with the flames swirling about them.

Latterly, however, Maggie's puritanical precepts had been softened by the teachings of Madame Reval, for that worthy lady had started what Peggy called a Sunday School class, which meant that a half hour three times a week was given to the study of the Bible. Under this tutelage it was not long before Rona realized that God was not the terrible sin-punishing Being depicted by the old servant, but that the Mosaic laws of the Old Testament had been made beautiful to us in their grandeur and simplicity, through the love revealed to us under the shadow of the Cross.

Then one day, inspired by the reading of an incident in history, she resolved to see if she could not do something to show her American spirit. A little later, finding that her patient was busy reading a new novel, she begged an hour's time and hurried to the library in quest of data to carry out her inspiration. On the way home she felt as if she wanted to run away somewhere, the day was so beautiful, with its yellow sun-

light, its magnolia blossoms, and the blue sky above. But these longings were resolutely put aside.

She had just started on the " inspiration " at a little table in the recessed window when a loud imprecation roused her. With a sigh that she had not been able to hat-pin the idea in her mind to the paper, she hurried to her patient, to learn that he had knocked the glasses off his nose to the floor. Whereupon the young nurse dropped on her knees and turned over rugs, poked under chairs and tables, and even prowled under the couch, until finally her search was rewarded. But alas! the glasses were smashed " to smithereens," as Mr. Hillis expressed it. Then came a word that Rona had never heard before, but the shocked expression that suddenly leaped into the innocent young eyes immediately recalled that gentleman to himself, and in shamefaced manner he deprecatingly apologized.

Until the glasses were replaced Rona's work had to be put aside, for Mr. Hillis, with nothing to occupy his time, in nervous restlessness was like a pent-up lion. Finally Rona, in sheer desperation, suggested that she read to him.

" Read to me! " he snarled disgustedly. " Do you think I'm an old mammy in an old ladies' home? " But something, perhaps it was the hopelessly pathetic look on the young face, made him apologize, and in an attempt to be good-natured he told her to " fire away."

In a short space the girl found that her leonine

patient had not only calmed down, but was chuckling over some item she had read from the evening paper. And so it came to be a part of each day's work to sit hour after hour reading, not only the newspapers, but novels, to keep her patient cheery. Then came word one day that Miss Judith Carvel was waiting to see her in the parlor. Oh, the joy of that announcement! But it was quickly succeeded by a blank expression, as Rona remembered that she was on duty.

Mr. Hillis, however, on learning that she had a caller, insisted that she go and see her, and so, in a few moments, she was hearing all about the Commencement,— who was the prettiest girl at the dance, what the club had accomplished at its last meeting, and other information of interest.

But when Judith finally brought her budget of news to an end by telling that the next club meeting was to be a "Liberty luncheon," to be held at her house, and that Rona must be there, the girl sadly shook her head.

Judith, in sheer disgust at Rona's determination that such joyousness was not for her, thoughtlessly voiced her opinion that Mr. Hillis was an "old sore-bones." "It is not right, Rona," she declared angrily, "that he should shut you up like a prisoner behind bars."

"Oh, Judith, Mr. Hillis is not an 'old sore-bones,'" Rona replied loyally. "He is not always cross, and sometimes he is real funny. He tells me lots of interesting things I want to know, too. And then I am only

doing what I can to make the time pass pleasantly for him, for he has been so good to me." And then the conversation drifted to the days when Rona was a lone little mortal wandering about the house with no one to mother her, and, half the time, with no one to play with.

"I can remember," said the girl somewhat sadly, "how as a little mite I used to climb upon the bay-window seat at dusk and peep into the adjoining house, when my little playmates used to gather about their mother as she told them sleepy-time stories. Or, how I would stand awkwardly silent, gazing with big, wistful eyes at her as she curled their hair, or tied a sash, always ending her task with a soft little kiss. Oh, how I wanted some one to tell me stories, or to kiss me the way their mother did.

"Then one night Maggie found me crying as I tried to peer under the drawn shade, to see my little friends singing kindergarten tunes at the piano. Maggie tried to comfort me and promised me all sorts of good things, but that didn't take away the ache in my heart for a mother.

"Then she brought me a bottle doll." Rona smiled at the remembrance. "She made it herself by fashioning a head out of a soft ball of cotton, tied over with a piece of linen marked for a face. This she fastened to a bottle, and dressed in some soft clingy stuff, with a tiny white apron, just the way my friends' mother

dressed. The dear soul said this was to be my 'mother-doll,' for if I would love it, it would remind me of my mother, and, if I was good, some day she might come and get me.

"The friend of Maggie's who had marked the little piece of linen must have had some artistic talent, for the doll's face was so sweet and had such a motherly look that I took it right to my heart. And it was not only an incentive to be good, as Maggie said, but in my lonesome times my baby heart would unburden itself, and I would tell it the things that I suppose every child is apt to do when won to confidence by more than the usual show of mother love."

Rona glanced shyly up at Judith from under her long lashes, and then added shamefacedly, "Oh, I suppose you think I am a great baby."

"Indeed, I do not," answered her friend warmly. "I think that you are just a poor motherless chick, deprived of what is your right." And then the dignified Judith, with wet eyes, jumped up and put her arms around Rona in a loving hug of sympathy.

"I know how you feel," she added, as she saw the girl's chin quiver, "and I am going to let you share some of my mother love, for — oh, Rona! I have the loveliest mother! She told me — when I was telling her about you — that I must have you at the house so she could mother you. But tell me, Rona, have you never tried to find your parents?"

"Yes. Sh-sh! Maggie and Mr. Hillis don't know," replied the girl, with a quick glance towards the door, "that I have advertised lots of times in the newspapers, but nothing ever came of it. Oh, I suppose my mother must be dead," said Rona with a sob. Then, as if she thought the subject too sacred to be discussed, she dried her eyes and in a quick change of tone again expressed her regret that she could not be at the Liberty luncheon.

A few minutes later she sorrowfully watched her friend hurry down the steps and then went back to read to Mr. Hillis.

Rona had been reading until her voice was beginning to get raspy. She had struggled hard to be interested as she animatedly read column after column of scrappy news that to her youthful mind possessed neither instruction nor entertainment. Her nerves were keyed to a strain when relief came by Ellen announcing that Miss Carvel wanted to speak to her on the telephone. Rona gave a look at her jailer, who good-naturedly growled, "Run along, child, and get the message."

Rona didn't run, she fairly flew to the end of the hall, forgetting in her delight that she had left the door of the room open. "Oh, no, Judith, I really could not leave Mr. Hillis," came the clear young voice. "He is able to be up now with a crutch, and he wants to globe-trot all over the room, and he might fall."

Mr. Hillis pricked up his ears,— he had paused a moment by the open door while trying his new crutch. An amused smile curved his lips while his eyes gleamed humorously.

"Oh, Judith, you just make me faint with envy to think I can't be with you." The speaker's voice was a trifle doleful. "Yes, the girls can toast me as America's Daughter, but it must be a dry drink." Then came a merry laugh. "And, yes — tell them I will be with them in spirit — the American spirit; yes — tell me all about the sport you have."

A moment later when Rona returned she found her patient sitting erect in his chair, with a rather curious expression on his face.

"Whom were you 'phoning to, Rona?" he asked quickly, as he heard her light footstep.

"Judith Carvel."

"Um-m." There was a strained silence, and then came the question, "Is her father John C. Carvel of the Stock Exchange?"

"I think so," returned the girl in surprise, "for I have heard Judith say he was a stock broker."

"I know him then — an all-around good sort, too. Ah, who is America's Daughter?"

Rona's eyes opened still wider. "Why — er — oh — it's a name they have given me." She could not have been more surprised if a German *Taube* had suddenly boomed into the room.

"You? And — well, who are *they?*"

"Why, Judith, and Peg, and Mae Allyn, and — why, all the girls of the club. Peggy Ditmas suggested the name."

"Ditmas? That's another familiar name. Where does she live?"

"In Flatbush," faltered Rona, who began to feel that she was being subjected to a needless inquisition in regard to her school friends.

"I guess her father must be Cornelius Ditmas, of one of the old Dutch families of Long Island. He belongs to the same club that I do in New York." Mr. Hillis looked as if he enjoyed this knowing of the fathers of Rona's friends, for his eyes were twinkling as he continued, "And how is it she came to call you America's Daughter? Rather a patriotic-sounding name, isn't it?"

Rona's cheeks reddened. She didn't see anything funny about the name, or the fact that her friends belonged to a club. Her chin went up in righteous indignation.

"Why — I don't know — that is — well — we have a club, and we have named it The Daughters of America, and that is how — Peggy — came to give me the name."

"Tell me about this club." Mr. Hillis yawned lazily as he stretched out his uninjured limb and set-

tled comfortably back in his chair as if awaiting the girl's reply.

Rona perceived that Mr. Hillis was amusing himself at her expense. She felt annoyed and angry. She swallowed hard, and then with as indifferent an air as she could command she gave a history of the club, even to relating parts of Judith's speech. For some undefined reason she could not explain she talked on until she had told about the Joy Girl and her torn bit of flag. This suggested the Belgian girl's sad story, and it was told at length.

There had been no comment during this recital, except the one word "Good!" while Rona was telling how she had made the motion that all those who were not American-born should have a chance to prove their American spirit by becoming probation members.

"And what about this thing at Judith's that makes you 'faint with envy'?" Mr. Hillis was watching the girl with a quizzical smile. "Why did you not tell me that you wanted to go?"

The color flushed into the girl's cheeks. "Oh, it is nothing — just a Liberty luncheon at Judith's, and — I thought — why, I had better stay and watch — you —"

"'Globe-trot around the room,' is that it?" The chuckle that followed did not tend to increase Rona's composure, for it had come to her that her conversation

at the telephone was the cause of all this questioning. Yes; he was just amusing himself. Her head went up defiantly. Well, let him laugh; girls had as much right as boys had to want to become better Americans.

"Well, I'm sorry, Rona, that you have had to miss meeting your friends, the patriotic young dames of America,— is that what you call them?" Again the quizzical twinkle in the gray eyes. "But never mind, little girl," in a more kindly tone, "you have taken good care of the old man — and I —"

"Thank — you — I wanted to nurse — you," came in a muffled voice from the girl. Inwardly she was at war with herself, for although she said she wanted to nurse Mr. Hillis, it had come reluctantly; she hated to be made fun of, and yet how mean and small she was — her eyes clouded — when he had been so kind to her.

"But, Rona," went on Mr. Hillis, "I don't want you to miss this Liberty thing. I can get along for a few hours; just run along and tell this Miss Carvel that you will be there."

Rona's eyes grew radiant. "Oh, do you really think you can get along without me? No, I'm afraid you might fall." Her eyes darkened seriously.

"Nonsense, I am not a child. I guess I can manage for a while. Go and 'phone." And Rona, without further parley, overjoyed at the prospect of the com-

ing delight, rushed to the telephone and in a few moments Judith knew the good news.

A little later, Rona, busily happy with the members of the club as they knitted stockings and sweaters, or made scrap-books for the sick soldiers, before the luncheon, was helping Judith fill a comfort kit. "Yes, here's the shaving-powder — and the buttons; that makes twenty things in all," finished the girl as she dropped the last-mentioned articles into the open bag.

"Well, I do hope the soldier boy who gets this kit," she added as she watched Judith fasten the bag, "will have a regular joy time when he sees all these things." The next moment she had turned, and, taking up her knitting, had seated herself by the side of the refugee, whose mournful eyes brightened as she made room for the girl on the divan.

Just at this point, Peggy, who had been flitting from one to the other indulging in bits of gossipy school news, made her voice heard. "I think, girls," she cried, "that as long as this luncheon is in honor of the Sires of the Nation, who gave us liberty, that some one should tell us something about them."

"I think you are right, Peg," acquiesced Rona quickly, "and I think Judith — as she knows more than any one else in the club — with the exception of yourself, Miss Peggy —" a bow from Peggy — "should inform us with regard to the Pilgrims."

"Oh, it's all right to hear about the Pilgrims," said

Poco in a slightly aggrieved tone, "but please remember, girls, that they didn't possess all the virtues by any means, for the Jamestown settlers had a few."

"Oh, no, indeed," Judith was on the lookout for squalls, "every one of the colonies contributed something towards the great principles, but perhaps as the Pilgrims endured the most for conscience' sake we generally speak of them first. For you know," she added, "they not only suffered persecution, giving up their homes and land, but they ventured perils and hardships — for think what it must have been in those days to cross the great ocean."

"Yes," added Rona, "and what it must have been to attempt to live in a wilderness with savages, when they knew, too, that death and sickness would meet them on every side. But go on, Judith, tell us about their lives before they came here."

"It is ancient history, Rona," pleaded Judith. But as the girls insisted she answered a little reluctantly, "Well, if you are determined that I shall be the History Lady I'll tell you what I know." Then she began her history story and told how the Separatists, or Pilgrims, simple folk from the Robin Hood country, had separated from the Church of England with its many observances, because they believed it God's desire that men should serve Him by a more simple form of worship. Their meetings in the little chapel belonging to the ancient manor house at Scrooby, their

persecutions on emigrating to Holland, their services in a low-ceiled room in Amsterdam, the city of refuge for the oppressed of all nations, were interestingly pictured.

The sail down the great waterway at the end of a year, to the Venice of the North, Leyden, the twenty-three little homes on a plot of ground called the *Klotsteeg,* and the Pilgrims' heroic endeavors for twelve years to hold together in good faith and fellowship, were parts of a familiar story. But all was vivified to the girls anew as the History Lady added interest by quaint little bits of description, and the characterization of these chosen men of God, gathered from many sources.

The Pilgrims' reasons for leaving the burgher town, their tribulations in securing a patent to land in the New World, and the incidents on the long dreary voyage of nine weeks on an unknown sea had been told. Judith had just anchored the *Mayflower* on the 9th of November, 1620, in Cape Cod Bay, now Provincetown Harbor, when she glanced up to see her mother smiling down at them in the doorway. With a nod to the girls listening so interestedly Mrs. Carvel asked, "Is Miss Rona Hillis here? Some one wants to speak to her on the telephone!"

CHAPTER VI

THE ROUND-ROBIN LETTER

IN a few moments Rona stood in the doorway. One look at her face, and Judith cried, "Oh, Rona, has anything happened?"

"I should say something has happened," answered the girl hurriedly. "Mr. Hillis has had a fall. I couldn't understand all Ellen said, she was so excited, but they have sent for the doctor, and I shall have to hurry right home."

A chorus of dismayed exclamations greeted this remark. "Yes, it is mean," assented Rona as she hastily pinned on her hat, "but it can't be helped."

"Well, if I were you, Rona," interposed Mae, "I should stay, and let the doctor and Maggie look after Mr. Hillis."

"Yes, Rona," added Peggy somewhat dubiously, "can't Maggie look after him?"

"No, indeed, girls; I have *just got* to go. Of course I'm frightfully disappointed, but it's just my luck, that's all." She stopped suddenly as her eyes shadowed. "Well, perhaps I shouldn't have come, but it's all right, girls; cheer up, and — oh, I say,

write me a round-robin letter and tell me all the fun you have. Now don't forget it." And then Rona, with a wave of her hand, was gone.

"Oh, it is just the meanest thing!" ejaculated Poco as she heard the front door close, while the Joy Girl surreptitiously dabbed at her eyes with the back of her hand.

"Well, she's a dear, anyway," commented Margery appreciatively.

"That she is," assented Judith, which opinion was immediately seconded by several voices.

But when Rona reached home, to her surprise she found her patient sitting up, talking to the doctor as cheery as a cricket. To her exclamations it was soon explained that the fall fortunately had done no harm; in fact, the doctor insisted that perhaps it would teach him caution. And then when the girl realized that after all there had been no need of her return, she hurried from the room hot and rebellious.

She glanced at her wrist-watch. Yes, it was too late to return. Her eyes flashed ominously as she seated herself on the trunk in the closet of her room and nervously tapped on the floor with her foot. "No, I won't look at you," she cried angrily as she turned resolutely away from a little set face that lay on the shelf above.

"Yes, I'm just tired of being shut up like this — of missing all the fun — and —" There was a stran-

gled sob. Ah, but it was Ellen's fault. She would just go and tell her what she thought. But, fortunately for poor Ellen, at that moment Rona heard Mr. Hillis calling her.

A few days later, as Rona sat writing on her "inspiration," Ellen entered and handed her a letter. With glistening eyes the girl tore it open, and ran her eyes down one page and then another. All at once her face sobered. No, she just couldn't go; her allowance was spent for that month. No indeed, she *would not* ask Mr. Hillis for one cent. Her lips closed determinedly. She would stay at home and comfort little Ann, for she, too, poor child, was minus the wherewithal to go. They would take trips together — do little old New York. A soft sigh fluttered from between her lips. It was a very faint sigh, but loud enough to cause Mr. Hillis, who had been dozing, to open his eyes and stare at the letter the girl was abstractedly holding in her hand.

"What! a letter from one of the Daughters of America?" There was a sarcastic but humorous inflection in the gentleman's voice that caused Rona to arm herself for war. She did wish he would not act as if she were a three-year-old kid.

"No, not from a Daughter, but from all of them." And then, somehow, the natural buoyancy and joy of her nature flew to her aid as she cried happily: "Oh, it's a Round-Robin Letter. The girls have told me

all about the glorious time they had at the Liberty luncheon."

"Well, read it to me, can't you?" came the startling reply. "Perhaps it will cheer me up, for it's confoundedly monotonous to live in one chair in one room for three weeks. Go on," he commanded imperiously; "let me know how the Daughters of America held forth in honor of Liberty."

Rona stared at him in speechless dismay. "Oh, I don't think you would enjoy it," she hastened to exclaim, "for it's just silly nonsense." There was a wail of despair in her voice.

"Never mind; one expects nonsense from the young, and then, perhaps, I'm in the mood for it."

Rona, seeing that she was facing the inevitable, lamely read:

"'DEAREST AMERICA'S DAUGHTER:

"'The Liberty luncheon was a bunch of firecrackers, for every Daughter fairly sizzled with patriotism. We tacked your picture to your empty chair decorated with a flag, and then we mourned by holding a mum celebration — perhaps the word "bum" would better express it — for the space of two minutes. And then we talked streaks — blue ones, yes, and red and white ones, too. Gee, excuse slang, but Judith is calling Time with a big T. Fraternally, patriotically, historically, and all the other *lys*.'

"Oh, I know Peggy wrote that," commented Rona, as she continued:

"'It was voted by the club to make a trip to New England this summer, and see the places where the Pilgrims and Puritans lived. I expect to go if my mother ever stops wailing because Jack has been ordered to the Border. She says she would never have let him join the Twenty-third if she had known there was going to be war. Hope you can go.'

"That's Mae," finished the girl, as she turned to the next page.

"'We missed you dreadfully at the luncheon, but the girls toasted you with many good wishes. How's Mr. Hillis — old sore-bones? Is he still grouchy?'"

Rona's voice ended in a sort of squeak. Oh, what did Judith mean by writing that?

"Never mind, Rona," came a laughing voice from the window. "The girl's right; I am an old sore-bones and a grouch, but I —"

"Oh, but Judith was — only — in — fun," stammered poor Rona. "Oh, *please,* Mr. Hillis," she pleaded in a frightened tone, "I did not call *you* — *that* — it was — just —"

"No apologies, child, but go on and read the rest

of the letter; it sounds promising." Mr. Hillis's eyes were aglint with a humorous twinkle.

"'I can already see the club's elect,'" read the girl, in a subdued voice, "'armed cap-à-pie with kodaks, bags, and guide-books, prowling among the sacred precincts of the revered Founders on knowledge bent — ah, time and tide wait for no man, and — next.

"'We are off the tenth of July on the American Footsteps — that's what we are going to call our trip. The Best Beloved is to chaperone us. She was at the luncheon, and she and Jude have planned the whole thing. It will cost fifty dollars a head. Oh, they're calling! Yours abbreviatedly.'

"Yes, that's Marge, I know. And this next, I'm sure, was written by Poco," commented Rona smilingly.

"'You love of a dear! We all tried to shed tears on your empty chair at the luncheon, but, alas, mortals are humans, and — well, the edibles were just deliciously and lusciously eatable. We have formed a Twenty-minutes Club, to read up on American history. I'm — there's Jude shrieking like a banshee, so good-by.'"

"Ah, this is Betty," prefaced Rona as she read:

"'I am so sorry you could not stay to the Liberty spread. Poco was splendid. She and Peggy kept us all laughing, but we grew very serious when Poco recited Stedman's "Liberty Enlightening the World." I wish I could remember the words,— they were fine; and then when she came to the part:

"My name is Liberty,
My throne is law,"

we all stood and drank to the Founders — and then to you. No, it was nothing very strong, just "Adam's ale" with some grape-juice and cold tea sweetened with sugar; it was fine. Oh, but I'm so sorry that the Joy Girl cannot go with us on the American Footsteps. She hasn't the money, and we girls are all hard up — oh, Jude's calling.'

"'My heart feels most sad, dear Miss Hillis, when I see not your sweet face, for you have been so kind to me. I regret that Monsieur Hillis is suffering, but hope that you will make the time pass to his pleasure. I have joy when I think I can go with you to see the places made famous by the great ones who loved the Liberty. I give you the love of my heart.'

"Of course that 's Isadore, the Belgian girl, and this I know is the little Joy Girl." Rona's eyes saddened as she read in a lowered tone:

"'Dear Miss Rona, we thought of you all the time at the luncheon, that is, when we weren't eating. I'm so sorry I can't go to Plymouth and those places, but I'm not going to weep. Miss Marston is going to give me some books to read that tell about all the places you'll visit. When I get low in spirits — the American spirit — I'm going to wave my little flag and cry, "Hurrah for America's Daughter."

"'From the Daughters of America with best wishes and love,'" ended Rona as she tucked the precious letter in her shirt-waist. And then with a sigh she added, "Poor little Joy Girl. I wish she could go, but I know it is rather hard for the girls just at this time to spare the money. I wish we could get up something to earn it." And then Rona, seeing that Mr. Hillis wanted to walk about, hurried to get his crutch.

A few minutes later, as she sat writing by the window, Mr. Hillis said, "What! you haven't answered it yet, have you? I wanted to —"

"Answered what?" inquired the girl in a puzzled tone.

"The Round-Robin Letter," was the reply.

Rona stared a moment and then said, "Oh, no, I will answer it to-night — after you have gone to bed. There's no hurry."

"Humph! Tuck me in when the chickens go to roost, I suppose. But I guess not, for I want you to

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answer it now." There was such insistent force in that *now*, that Rona's heart quaked.

"Why, oh —"

"Yes, I want to dictate to you what to say," continued Mr. Hillis persistently. "Get your pen and paper."

Rona's heart dropped to the tips of her shoes. O dear! then he was really angry with Judith after all. Suppose he would never let her have anything to do with her. Rona bridled rebelliously. Oh, why did she write that stuff? But there was no parleying with that decisive voice, so the girl meekly got her writing materials and settled herself at the table.

"Just start it yourself," said Mr. Hillis, "and then let me know when you come to the part about going on the American Footsteps."

The girl's heart leaped hopefully. "Then he is not going to pitch into Judith after all," she said to herself. After writing two or three pages she cried, "Now I am ready," glancing up at Mr. Hillis, who was lying back smoking, great clouds of white smoke rolling upward from his cigar. Rona knew the signs: he was busy thinking, and curiously wondered why he was so anxious to have a part in her correspondence.

"Dear Judith," dictated the voice from the chair, "I am so glad that the 'Daughters of America'— is that name right?" queried the gentleman in a bantering tone.

"Yes," nodded the girl.

"— are going to make that pilgrimage to New England, for I am sure it will help them to appreciate the Founders of this nation,—" Rona's eyes looked up interestedly,—"and help them to live up to the principles they gave us, especially now when we want to make it hot for those bandits down in Mexico —"

"Oh!" escaped from Rona involuntarily, "but, Mr. Hillis, why, I — am afraid that Judith will know — er — that I did not write the letter, because — why, you see, I wouldn't talk like that."

"Oh, you wouldn't!" Mr. Hillis broke into an amused laugh. "Well, I suppose not. Well, then tell her — to do as the Pilgrims did, trust in God and do right."

The transition from what Rona was inclined to call the ridiculous to the sublime was so unexpected that she stared a second, and then with dancing eyes wrote down what she had been told to.

"Yes," went on Mr. Hillis, "I think it will be fine to go, and I shall be delighted to make one of the party."

"Oh, do you mean it?" almost screamed the girl in her delighted surprise. "But are you sure you want me to go?" she hurriedly cried; "for, you see, it will cost —"

"Never you mind that part of it," said Mr. Hillis, his face set in a broad grin, "that is my bit."

"Oh, the darling!" thought the girl; "he was just working up to this all the time."

"Yes," continued the voice, "it is a capital idea and Mr. Hillis wants me to go and have the time of my life. There, that's finished!" cried the gentleman in question in a relieved tone. "Now run down and get me the paper and see what the war news is, will you?"

A little later, as she handed Mr. Hillis the paper, that gentleman looked at her in surprise. "Why, what's the matter?" he asked, for the girl's face did not wear as joyful a look as it did when she left the room.

"Oh, nothing," she replied, "only — well — I think that perhaps I had better not go with — the girls — for —"

"Not go with the girls!" cried Mr. Hillis; "do you mean to New England?"

Rona nodded dumbly. Something stuck in her throat. "Well, you see, I was thinking about Ann."

"Ann! Ann who?"

"Why, the little girl who can't go, the little Irish girl, who carried the flag next to her heart."

"Oh, yes, she is the one who hasn't any one to foot the bill, is that it?"

"Yes," replied Rona regretfully, "and perhaps I had better not go — for you see —"

"Not go?" echoed her companion in a tone that

indicated that he thought Rona had suddenly gone insane. "And why?" he persisted.

"Why, you see," floundered Rona, "I thought I wouldn't be able to go and planned to help her bear her disappointment, and now — well, I'm afraid it would be selfish for me to leave her."

"Nonsense," returned Mr. Hillis. "Let me tell you, girl, don't give up a good thing for some one who, after all, may not appreciate it. Perhaps we can manage — but don't bother me now; read the paper."

It was the night of the patriotic celebration, and Rona, in a flurry of excitement, was bustling about getting ready. Keyed to tense anticipation, tempered with the satisfaction that she could enjoy the good time coming with a clear conscience, she fairly brimmed over with joy, for her patient was so far recovered that he had taken a walk that very afternoon with Tom. To be sure, he still used a crutch, but he had learned how to engineer it.

And yet the girl's joyousness was punctured with little stabs of regret, as, in the keen consciousness of her own happy state, she remembered that the little Joy Girl could not go with them on their trip to New England. "O dear!" she sighed. "I just hate to let her know I'm going, for it will make her disappointment harder to bear."

She glanced down at the cushion, looking for her

class pin. Her eyes dilated, for, pinned to the cushion, was a letter addressed to Miss Rona Hillis.

"Why, how funny," she soliloquized. "Ellen should have given that to me this morning." She tore it open, and a check fluttered out. The girl eyed the brown slip in bewilderment. Her eyes flew back to the letter, and then a little scream escaped her. "Oh! Oh! Isn't this *just too lovely!* Oh, I might have known!"

The next moment the letter with the check was hastily stuffed into the bag with her slippers and fan, and Rona, with sparkling eyes, was hurrying down the stairs to where, at the foot, Ellen stood waiting to accompany her to Reval Hall.

Twenty minutes later she was standing in the little dressing-room adjoining the stage, which had been erected in the gymnasium, looking anxiously about for Judith. Ah, there she was, acting as assistant to the Best Beloved, who, as the coach for the little play that was to follow, was occupied in touching up a lip or cheek here or there, or admonishing some one as to their rôle in the cast.

With a little rush Rona was at her side, holding out the letter. "Quick!" she cried; "read it."

Judith, somewhat startled at Rona's agitated manner, dazedly took the letter. "Why, whom is it from?" she questioned slowly, "and what is the check for?" as the brown slip fell out of the envelope.

"Just read the letter and you will see," laughed happy Rona in suppressed excitement.

And Judith, seeing that to comply was the quickest way of having the mystery settled, slowly read:

"'The enclosed is for Miss Rona Hillis, as a little tribute to the patient endurance and sweetness of temper shown by her in nursing old Sore-Bones. It is a gift to be used to pay the expenses of Ann Kelly as a member of the pilgrimage to be known as "The American Footsteps." That it will give pleasure to Rona, and also to the little maid who carries the United States flag next to her heart, is the wish of

"'JOHN A. HILLIS.'"

"Oh, Judith," cried Rona, "isn't he just a dear!" And then followed an account of what had happened on the receipt of the Round-Robin letter, and how she was compelled in fear and trepidation to answer it.

"Hurrah for old Sore-Bones!" cried Judith with glowing eyes. "He has proved himself a dear, and a tiptop one, too." And then, before her friend could stop her, she was waving the check above her head, crying, "Oh, girls, what do you think? Rona Hillis has given fifty dollars to pay Ann Kelly's —"

But a hand was hastily placed over her mouth as Rona exclaimed, "Oh, Judith, I didn't give it." But Judith persisted until they were surrounded by the girls, all listening to her with vividly bright eyes. A series of cheers now broke on the air as America's Daughter was vigorously applauded, while the Joy

Girl, with eyes black from excitement at the unexpected good fortune, stood dazedly clinging to her hand, in an effort to express her thanks.

But Ann's good fortune became a thing of the past as the girls transferred their attention to Peggy, who was triumphantly displaying her top boots and her beautiful navy blue uniform, adorned with shining buttons and epaulettes and lace ruffles, that she was to wear as the naval hero, Paul Jones, in the little play. Peggy, not at all averse to the stellar rôle, deftly tucked her cocked hat under her arm, clicked her heels together, and, with her hand on her heart, made a bow that would have done credit to the renowned Beau Brummell.

At this instant Mae, standing near the door, was heard crying, "No, I don't care if I am speaking about my mother,"— her eyes were like fire —"she is just as mean as she can be!" She was speaking to Betty, who was drawing away from the girl with a shocked look in her eyes.

"Who's been treading on your toes, Mae?" questioned Judith laughingly, as the girls flocked about her. "You look as if you were going to eat poor Betty, even to her beautiful wig."

Mae turned away from the group with an angry fling of her head, as they all stared curiously at her.

"What is it, Mae?" inquired Rona solicitously, as

she followed the girl. "Who's been hurting you? Surely not the Bird of Peace?"

"No, it was not Betty; it's mother," replied the girl in a choked voice. "She says I cannot go with you girls on the American Footsteps — says I have got to go with her to Saratoga. One never has a bit of fun there, sitting around with a lot of old maids and dried-up fossils all dolled up. Mother treats me like a kid, anyway, and I think she is just as mean as she can be."

"Oh, Mae," pleaded Rona, putting her arm around the girl, "don't speak that way about your mother, for you know she is not mean or hateful. She loves you — and — just suppose you should lose her; you know you can never have but one mother."

Mae grew suddenly silent, for something in Rona's words had recalled to her a darkened room, with a still, motionless form on the bed, and again she saw herself lying on the floor sobbing softly as the white-capped nurse whispered, "Don't cry, little girl; mother will get better, I'm sure." Then she saw herself led from the room by the same gentle hand, and as she piteously asked if she said her prayers to God would He make her mother well, the gentle voice said, "Perhaps he will, Mae; I would say them." And Mae did say them, and — her mother lived — and now she was telling these girls that she was mean and hateful.

Mae covered her eyes with her hand, as if to shut out the picture from her mind, or, perhaps, to shut out the sound of the unfilial words she had just uttered.

Turning suddenly she caught Rona's hand in hers, crying in a choked voice, "You — are — right, Rona; I should not — speak that — way." She wiped her eyes hurriedly. "Yes, I know mamma loves me,— but — oh, she gets on my nerves sometimes — when she won't let me do what I want to — and I do want to go with you girls on this trip." Her eyes had filled again.

"Oh, I'll tell you what we'll do," interjected Miss Peggy's cheery treble. She had heard Mae's penitential confession and her heart flamed in sympathy. "We'll all go in a body some day and explain things to your mother, and just make her let you go."

"Yes, that's just what we'll do," eagerly assented Betty and Rona, but a hurried call that the performance was to begin in a moment caused the girls to scatter, leaving Rona with Mae, who stood with downcast eyes in shamefaced silence.

A moment later the girls were watching Judith through some peep-holes in the curtain leading to the stage. That young lady, looking unusually well in her simple white gown, with a red rose in her dark hair, was standing on a low dais in front of the platform, expressing, in dignified pose, although her voice trembled slightly, the pleasure it gave the Daughters

of America to extend a greeting to their friends on this their first patriotic celebration. A few words in regard to the purposes of the club and so on, and Judith, amid loud applause, had stepped one side and Madame Reval had taken her place.

After a word or two of greeting from the respected head of the school, the curtain rolled up, displaying a beautiful American flag, its graceful folds almost filling the center of the stage. Such tumultuous applause broke forth as the audience hailed the national emblem that it was a moment or so before Madame was able to make it known that the flag was her gift to the progressive American maidens, in appreciation of their worthy and patriotic endeavors to become better Americans.

As the plaudits dwindled, after Judith had gracefully accepted the flag on behalf of the Daughters, Margery appeared on the dais to read a paper on "Colonial Flags." As she was animatedly telling how some soldiers at Fort Stanwix made the first American flag from an old soldier's coat, and a red shirt, a fierce bark rang through the room.

The girl, flushing with annoyance, turned to see Skipperee crawling out from under the stage curtain, and gazing with his shiny black eyes at the audience, while a white, hairy thing dangled from his mouth.

As the audience realized that here was a number not on the program they broke into cheers and laughter.

Skipperee, evidently thinking that he had won an encore, trotted excitedly back and forth before the footlights, shaking his head vehemently, as he playfully twisted and twirled the hairy thing.

In the midst of the laughter, Peggy, seated on the front row, suddenly recognized that the object of Skipperee's gambols was her beautiful white wig — she knew it by the black velvet bow — that she was to wear in the little playlet to take place later. With a sudden, sharp cry, and with dire vengeance in her eyes, she darted swiftly behind the side curtain leading to the stage.

An instant later her yellow head projected itself cautiously from behind the curtain, and then two long white arms reached out in an endeavor to get the culprit, who just at that moment had dropped the wig. But Peggy was game; her hand shot out again and again, but each time as she was about to grab the dog's collar he would veer to one side. Finally, just as her fingers had almost closed on him, he caught up the wig, and, with a wild glare in his eyes, made a still wilder leap over the footlights, landing beside Margery, as she stood holding her breath with her hands clasped tragically. The next moment he was disappearing down the aisle, with the wig still in his mouth.

CHAPTER VII

"THE UNCONQUERED AND UNSTRICKEN FLAG"

FOR an awful moment Peggy stared in bewilderment, and then, with a quick determination not to be outdone by the little thief, she rushed from behind the curtain, and the next second she, too, had made a wild leap through space, and landed, not on her feet, but in a more humble attitude — on her knees. But she was up in a second and tearing down the aisle in a mad rush after the dog, while the audience, at this unexpected climax, gave vent to cheers and laughter.

Two minutes later, Peggy, her blue eyes like stars, her cheeks abloom, and her hair in an unruly fluff, with the captured animal in her arms, excitedly waving the wig, appeared running up the side aisle. Thunders of applause greeted the girl, who, although somewhat upset by her heated chase in pursuit of Skipperee, turned and made a dignified curtsy and then hurriedly disappeared behind the curtain.

While the audience was still laughing over Peggy's performance Rona stepped on the dais. Her eyes were luminous, her cheeks crimson, but her chin was up,— a sure sign, as the girls always declared, that Rona was

game. After a slight pause to coax her tongue down from the roof of her mouth, where it was sticking like a piece of court-plaster,— as she afterwards told Judith,— in a clear voice, but slightly tremulous, the school story-teller told how, on a June day in the year 1777, five young girls met at the house of Mary Langdon, in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

Here, from pieces of their best gowns, starred with white silk from the bridal gown of Mistress Helen Seavey,— married to an officer of the New Hampshire line in May,— in accordance with the resolution adopted by Congress on the fourteenth of that very month, they made one of the first American flags.

After telling of its presentation to Captain Paul Jones, who had been commissioned by Congress to the command of the *Ranger* on the same day as the flag resolution was passed, Rona told how this silken emblem of liberty floated from that staunch little vessel the following fourth of July, in honor of the first celebration of the Declaration of Independence.

In November the *Ranger* sailed for France, and on the fifth of the following month the gallant captain had placed in the hands of Dr. Franklin the dispatches telling of the surrender of Burgoyne. In February, 1778, the *Ranger* passed through the French fleet and received the first national salute to the Stars and Stripes by the guns of a foreign nation. Later, when Paul Jones was made commodore of the squadron, he

nailed this little national emblem to the staff of the flagship of the fleet, the *Bon Homme Richard.*

Then came the recital of how in September, 1779, the *Bon Homme Richard,* during a great naval conflict in British waters, captured his Majesty's ship, the *Serapis,* and then sank, the only ship ever known that conquered and captured the ship that sank her. And what became of the flag? the audience wondered. Well, Rona left that story for Peggy, who, as Paul Jones at the house of Betsy Ross in 1781, told of its fate to Mary Langdon, one of its five makers. For as the girl had recited the various scenes in this historical incident, they had been made graphic by the little drama of "The Unconquered and Unstricken Flag."

And Peggy was every inch a man in that last scene, as, in her blue uniform with its show of gold lace and ruffles, in answer to Mary's question as to what had become of the flag, she told of the battle and the sinking of the ship. Perhaps the old-time atmosphere of faded rugs, spinning-wheel, and the various relics of the Revolution, with the quaint costumes of the five maidens in their daintily flowered gowns and kerchiefs inspired her, as in a firm, ringing voice she cried: "Yes, as the good old ship plunged at the last, her taffrail momentarily rose in air, so that the last vestige mortal eyes ever saw of the *Bon Homme Richard* was the defiant waving of the 'Unconquered and Unstricken Flag.'

"Ah, Miss Mary," continued the commodore — a tear actually shone in Peggy's eye, "I couldn't bear to strip it from the poor old ship in her last agony, nor could I deny to my dead on her decks, who had given their lives to keep it flying, the glory of taking it with them."

The five flag-makers now stepped to the side of Paul Jones, and to the tune of "John Brown's Body" sang,

"The good old ship, the *Richard*, lies a moldering in the sea,
The good old ship, the *Richard*, lies a moldering in the sea,
The good old ship, the *Richard*, lies a moldering in the sea,
But the flag is waving still!"

singing the "Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!" with a fervor and gusto that left no doubt in the minds of the audience that the Daughters of America were as fully inspired to patriotic deeds as their predecessors who had lived so long ago.

In a jiffy, as Peggy expressed it, the girls had effected a change of costume, and appeared to the sound of the fife and drum, marching on the stage in red and white striped skirts, blue bodices starred with white, and gilt helmets, each one surmounted by an eagle, as they sang their club song:

"We are Daughters of America,
The Isle of the Free, Columbia!
We've sworn by love for humanity
To fight for the right of liberty!
Arm to the conflict those who are free
Liberty calls from over the sea!"

As they sighted the flag they lined up and saluted it, and then a moment later they broke forth into the singing of " Yankee Doodle," " Columbia," " The Red, White, and Blue," and other patriotic songs, finally ending with " The Star-Spangled Banner," in which every one joined.

The giving of the honor merits now took place. Judith, for her cleverness as manager of the celebration, Margery for her colonial paper, Poco for writing and composing the club song, and others, each received a star as a reward for their efforts. The Joy Girl was radiantly happy as she received two stripes of white for her recitation of " Old Glory."

Rona was looking a little distressed, for her name had not been called. " Oh, surely," she thought ruefully, " I am entitled to something, if only a stripe." She felt almost tearful to think that her efforts had not been recognized when they were so necessary, too. Oh, Madame was calling " America's Daughter." Why, did she mean her? A sharp prod from Peggy to " Hurry up, old slow-poke! " assured her that she did. With a glad light in her eyes she hurried forward to receive with much bewilderment — a whole regiment of stars and stripes — a handsome silken flag as a reward for the patriotic little drama, " The Unconquered and Unstricken Flag."

The sun like a red-gold plate was dropping slowly

into a rim of silver-gray sea, on a warm day in the early part of July, when the American Footsteppers, as they called themselves, lined up behind the railing on one of the numerous decks of the *Massachusetts* of the Eastern Steamship line, en route for Boston.

They partook of a box supper,— each girl bringing sandwiches, salad, or whatever toothsome edible she could pack into a box,— gathered around an improvised table of camp-chairs in one of the state-rooms, and then hurried out to enjoy the most delightful of twilight sails through Long Island Sound.

But presently it grew dark. Suddenly the ship's search-light, sweeping the sky and water like a golden broom, blazoned into view, its ever-changing colors suggestive of some tricksy power from Elfland.

As the light disappeared the girls fell to watching the steamer's trail of foam that flared up in the darkness of night like patches of snow, or gazed up at the silent sky with its mystical wonders, until every one grew drowsy and retired to their berths. For a time they could be heard chatting to each other as they made ready to climb into their bunks, and then a sudden stillness announced that slumber had claimed its own.

There was a scurrying time in the morning when the boat arrived at the Boston pier, and the girls, after a light breakfast, hurried on board a steamer for

Provincetown, to begin their "footsteps" with the Pilgrims' landing-place on the Cape Cod shore.

It was a wondrous sail, over blue, sun-gleamed waters; Rona called it a sail o' dreams as the beauty of each point of interest to her imaginative mind was vivified by some mystical fancy. She was sure that the forty-seven islands in the Boston bay were the footprints of some titanic giant of past ages, when he stepped from one shore to another.

The girls had their first introduction to the men and women they were to trail, as they eagerly viewed the three rocky islands in Boston harbor, "The Brewsters," named in honor of Elder Brewster and his women folk.

The girls were much interested when Judith informed them that in those days an elder of the church was esteemed almost as highly as the pastor. William Brewster, she explained, was not only a graduate of Cambridge, but he had gone with William Davidson, Queen Elizabeth's special envoy to The Hague, when she agreed to help the Dutch in their war against Spain.

"It has been said," supplemented Miss Marston, "that Davidson thought so much of his young secretary that he transferred to him the iron keys of the three revolutionary towns, when they were placed in his keeping by the Dutch, and that Brewster slept with them under his pillow. When Davidson lost his po-

sition at court, Brewster returned and took his father's place as 'post' at the little relay or inn at Scrooby. It was through him — he was a strong Puritan — that the members of the little congregation at Scrooby were enabled to hold their meetings at the chapel of the manor-house. He became a printer at Leyden, and it is said that a book bearing his imprint is considered very valuable.

"The headland of Hull, known as Point Allerton, was so named in deference to Isaac Allerton," went on the Best Beloved, "as he was highly esteemed by the Pilgrims as their man of business. This headland has also been called 'The Promontory of the Crosses,' or Krossanes, as it was here that the Norseman Thorwald, the brother of Leif the Lucky, was buried, after being killed in an encounter with the natives. At his own request he was buried with a cross at his head and one at his feet."

Mae Allyn and the Joy Girl, in their eagerness to see Krossanes, climbed hastily up on the low seat by the ship's railing, as if in the hope of seeing the crosses. No crosses were to be seen, however, and Mae stepped down. But alas! her stretch of limb was curtailed by the circumscribed narrowness of her modish skirt, and the next instant, with her limbs doubled up under her, she landed in a sprawling attitude on the deck.

Before the mortified girl could resume her normal

position, a young man sitting near jumped up, assisted Mae to her feet, and helped to brush off the dust from her skirt. Then, with a deferential lift of his traveling cap, he resumed his seat and began talking with a middle-aged gentleman, who seemed to be his traveling companion.

As Miss Marston quickly turned to thank him,—he was a broad-shouldered, manly appearing lad,—he rose and bowed ceremoniously. The brown eyes, however, above his sun-tanned cheeks were twinkling as he glanced over her head at the group of girls, who were hurrying the mortified Mae down to the ladies' cabin.

But Miss Marston did not see his merry amusement, for she was staring with widening eyes at the older man, who had also risen to his feet with a sudden glance of recognition. The lady had turned, however, and with flushed cheeks was hurrying after the girls. But a curious little gleam in her eyes betrayed that she, too, had not only seen the glance of recognition, but that it had awakened within her a sudden, strange emotion.

Notwithstanding her companions' sympathetic inquiries as to whether or not she was hurt, and their tender solicitude for her humiliation, Mae scowled petulantly and refused to appear again on deck. After a time, leaving her to Betty, they all hurried back to their seats by the railing.

Thereupon Peggy, with brutal frankness, asseverated that it served Mae just right for being so bent on doing the latest "stunt" in style. "Anybody with a grain of sense," she averred laughingly, "would know that she would come to grief with a skirt a quarter of a yard wide."

"Oh, Peggy, it is not as bad as that," expostulated Rona. "But I'm sorry for her, even if she is determined to look like a fashion-plate."

"It is not her fault, but her mother's," spoke up Margery sensibly, "for she is always trying to instill into Mae that she must be modish, in order to show distinction and elegance."

"Well, she showed it," remarked Poco, dryly. And then she added laughingly, "I have been so afraid I would get some of the powder she dabs on her face on my new gown." She glanced complacently down at her natty, navy-blue suit with its middy blouse, and its chevrons, as she called the two tiny American flags embroidered on her arm. This was the club's coat-of-arms, the girls declared, and very proud they were of it.

They were now far from land, the shoreline looking in the distance like a fine thread of silver, and as they all vowed that they were ravenously hungry, the lunch-boxes were opened and they were soon enjoying the merriest of repasts, even Mae, who, when the pangs

of hunger assailed her, had come down from her high perch to have a nibble at the goodies.

Some time later as they were all reading their books, tired of gazing at water and sky, a sudden cry was heard, for High Pole Hill, Provincetown, had been sighted. The girls immediately lined up against the ship's railing and stared with vivid interest at the long line of gray sand hills and the many lighthouses that glistened in the sun as the ship steamed past. To add to their pleasure they heard the older gentleman with whom Mae's rescuer, as the girls had dubbed the young man who had picked her up, had been conversing, say that it was somewhere near Long Point lighthouse that the Pilgrims landed.

"It was while the *Mayflower* was anchored here, wasn't it," asked one of the girls, "that the compact was signed?"

"Yes, it was drawn up in the ship's cabin," answered Judith, "the first American hall of legislature. Here the Pilgrims laid the first stone in the American commonwealth, by forming themselves into a body politic, which guaranteed just and equal rights to each man. The Compact was written, studied, and signed on top of an old chest by forty-one male members of the *Mayflower* company."

Poco, who was the rhymester and reciter of the company, now broke into:

"'The Pilgrims rose, at this God's word,[1]
And sailed the wintry seas;
With their own flesh nor blood conferred,
Nor thought of wealth or ease.
They left the towers of Leyden town,
They left the Zuyder Zee;
And where they cast their anchor down,
Rose Freedom's realm to be.'"

"Was it here, I wonder," soliloquized Peggy, somewhat loudly, "that the Pilgrim mothers went ashore to wash their clothes?"

But Poco was gayly chanting:

"'And there did the Pilgrim Mothers,[2]
"On a Monday," the record says,
Ordain for their new-found England
The first of her washing days.

"'And there did the Pilgrim Fathers,
With matchlock and ax well-slung,
Keep guard o'er the smoking kettles
That propt on the crotches hung.'"

"Oh, Poco," broke in Peggy, with mock bewailment, "don't tell us that these Sunday-go-to-meeting men, these ancestors of great Americans, did the washing."

There was a burst of merriment at this dramatic interruption, and then Poco cried: "Oh, no, Peg, but they must have helped, for the rhyme says,

"'Was to fashion a crane for the kettle
And order a washing day.'"

[1] "The Word of God to Leyden Came," by J. E. Rankin.
[2] "The First Proclamation of Miles Standish," by M. J. Preston.

"Humph!" grunted one of the girls critically, "that sounds rather lordly to me."

"No, indeed," adjudged Judith, "only, like all true American gentlemen, they saw what was needed, made the suggestion, and provided the wherewithal,— by getting the women and clothes ashore,— and then doing their part by propping the kettles and keeping guard. No doubt the women were shaking in their boots from fear of the red men. I should have been afraid they would appear and tomahawk me."

"Or steal the clothes and eat the soap," laughed Peggy; "for that is the way they do in the missionary stories one hears."

> "'And the children were mad with pleasure
> As they gathered the twigs in sheaves,
> And piled on the fire the fagots,
> And heaped up the autumn leaves.'"

"Yes," continued Rona, who was the verse-reciter. "I can see the children,— you know there were about thirty on the *Mayflower*,— running up and down the beach gathering sweet-smelling juniper, or cedar wood to make the fires."

"It was from this place," said Judith, "that Captain Standish and his sixteen valiant men-at-arms set forth to find a site for their future home. They were gone two days, during which time they saw a few Indians with a dog, whom they immediately trailed, but with no success. Later, they built a signal fire on the beach

to assure their women folk that they had not been tomahawked. On their return they told of finding a grave and the remains of an old fort, and showed the Indian corn they had found buried in the ground."

"And told how the dignified William Bradford was caught in a noose of hemp," supplemented Rona laughingly, "— a deer-trap,— and hung by his leg from a tree."

"Oh, yes," said Judith, smiling; "I had forgotten that rather undignified occurrence. Bradford, you know, girls, was the second governor of the colony. As a boy he used to walk from Austerfield to Scrooby to attend the Separatist meetings in the little chapel. He became a silk-weaver at Leyden and married Dorothy May, who fell overboard one day while he was away on one of the exploring expeditions. They had a little boy, but he had been left behind in Leyden."

"Yes, Bradford was the historian of the community, and the author of the 'History of Plymouth Plantation,'" added the Best Beloved. "And thereby hangs a tale," she continued, "for that valuable manuscript was loaned to Judge Sewall by the governor's grandson, who loaned it to Dr. Prince, the minister of the Old South Church in Boston, who stored it away in the steeple chamber among his books. When the British returned to England after the Revolution the manuscript was missing. It was never found until it mysteriously turned up in the library of the bishop of

London at Fulham. It was then returned to America, and in the spring of 1897 was placed, with attendant ceremonies, in the Massachusetts State Library.

"On the second expedition," went on Judith, "the explorers set forth in the ship's shallop, with Captain Jones and the mate, Clark, and cruised some distance along the headland. Although they found a mysterious-looking mound which proved to be the grave of a white man, saw a deserted Indian village and a wigwam, they did not succeed in finding a place to settle. On their return they found that the second baby, Peregrine White, had been born. You know one, Oceanus Hopkins, had been born during the ship's voyage over. And that young Francis Billington, who seems to have been the 'bad boy' of the colony, had done his best to set fire to the ship by making *squibs,* and discharging an old fowling-piece he had found in the cabin.

"On the third cruise the Pilgrims built a barricade on shore and encamped. During the night they heard strange noises, but decided it must be wild animals. It was not until morning, when a shower of arrows suddenly fell in their midst, that they discovered that they had been attacked by Indians. The white men's firearms frightened them away, and the Pilgrims, glad of this their 'first encounter,' gathered many of the arrows and later sent them to England.

"They now continued their journey, and after much

hard rowing and anxiety — for during a storm their rudder had broken, and they were in danger of shipwreck — they reached an island in Plymouth harbor. This they named Clark's Island, in honor of the first man who stepped ashore. They remained here over Sunday, and held services on a large, flat-bottomed boulder called Pulpit Rock, and —"

"Oh, Judith," pleaded Peggy, "don't tell us any more about the island until we get there, for we want all information served hot on the spot."

"Instead, Judith," cried Margery, "tell us something about the men who went on the exploring expedition."

"Oh, I think you know all about them," replied the girl, "for you all know about Standish. He came of a race of fighters, for he was a Standish of Standish, was a college man, and had traveled extensively. He won his captaincy while in her Majesty's forces when aiding the Dutch in their war against Spain. It was while he was stationed in Leyden that he joined the English exiles. He married a beautiful girl from the Isle of Man, who was called the English Rose.

"Bradford and Brewster you have learned about, and Carver — well, he was the first governor, having been elected when the compact was drawn up. He did not live long, however, as he was taken ill one day in the field shortly after landing, and died."



By this time the steamer had reached the long wharf, and the tourists hastened through the crowd of town's people awaiting letters and mail from Boston, to register at the hotel where they were to spend the night.

CHAPTER VIII

AN ADVENTURE WITH A ROCK IN IT

YES, the girls had seen the odd, curious little town built on the sand-hills of the cape, duly named by its discoverer, Bartholomew Gosnold, on account of the great quantities of cod found there by his men. Really, it was the first landing-place of the Pilgrims, and so with keen interest they had strolled on its main street with its queer little shops. They had wallowed in its sand-hills, as Peggy declared, as they sank ankle-deep in drifts of sand blown into curiously shaped peaks, scoops, and mounds, constantly changing in color.

They had listened to fish-yarns from an old weather-scarred sea-captain, as to the remarkably fine catches hauled into port at times, and heard numerous thrilling tales about warships taking refuge in the harbor in a mad race for safety during the Revolution.

They had admired, to his proud delight, as he pointed out the Pilgrim memorial on the high summit overlooking the harbor, which had been given by the government to the State of Massachusetts, a nation's tribute to its founders.

But stamped on Rona's memory with clear-cut sharpness were the words she had read on the tablet, from the speech of a noted man, "that the Pilgrims founded and maintained a state without a king or noble, and a church without a bishop or priest." These words had set her to thinking, and in a way she began to perceive the key-note to the grand principles, as they had been called at the club meeting, back of the nation's flag.

On the train the girls had amused themselves by noting the different places, as indicated by Miss Marston, where Standish and his men had stopped on their explorations. But as the train steamed on, they would have taken to reading their books if they had not been diverted by Peggy. She had wiggled and sighed, declaring that she hated railroads, until the girls in sheer desperation, were about to declare that they would put her off the train if she did not keep still, when she suddenly spied Mae's "rescuer"— the name had clung — and his companion in the adjoining car.

"Dear me!" she exclaimed dismally; "I do wish something would happen so we could meet that nice-looking boy with the brown eyes, who picked Mae up yesterday."

The girls laughed merrily at the incident the remark called to mind, although Mae frowned with annoyance. Rona, seeing the frown and anxious to pitch

the key to another tune, said smilingly, "And I should judge, Peg, from the way the brown eyes watched you on the boat, that their owner liked girls with blue ones."

"He looks as if he might be an American at any rate," remarked Mae, brightening a little.

"I was more attracted by his broad, square shoulders, and the erect way he carries himself," broke in Margery. "I'd be willing to bet a cookie he belongs to some military school."

But now they were in Plymouth, the quaint little town set on a hill, with its sloping, tree-shaded streets, old-time houses, and ancient memorials, bordered by blue waters and jutting headlands. Rona, with two or three of the girls, crowded into an old-fashioned carryall whose horse stood drowsing by the little wooden station, and then they were driving down a tilting street where sunbeams came in glinting riot between the leaf-laden lindens and elms, throwing odd, fanciful patches on the brick sidewalks. The driver said it was North Street, and that Plymouth Rock lay just beyond, at the foot of the hill.

As the gray roan ambled sedately down the incline, the old-fashioned New England houses, with their old-time doorways and door-steps, shyly peeping from beneath their fringes of green, were so suggestive of the long ago that Rona's heart was strangely stirred. But in a moment or so she had bent forward eagerly,

and was silently gazing at the placid waters of the harbor that stretched in wide expanse before them, with its long breakwater — a glistening bar of silver — dividing its ripples from the waters of the bay beyond.

As the girls' eyes swept over the blue-sheeted waters the driver pointed with his whip to the left, to the monument of Myles Standish on Captain's Hill at Duxbury. Clark's Island, the headland of Gurnet Point, with its twin lighthouses, dipping its nose into the bay, and on the right the white beaches of the promontory of Manomet, glistening in the sun like lines of pearl, were all eagerly viewed.

But the girls were staring down at the foot of the incline. Yes, there was the famous Forefather's Rock standing forth, a distinctive landmark, in front of a rusty gray wharf and a long line of ramshackle warehouses on the water's edge.

A crack of the whip, a few more jolts of the old carryall, and the girls had jumped to the ground and stood gazing at a tall granite shaft. Its curving pedestals, from which rose double columns, supporting a domelike structure with rounding tops, gave it the appearance of a monument. Beneath, in the center of the four arched doorways, surrounded by a spiked iron railing, rested a large rock, its grayness begrimed with dust, and the date 1620 chiseled on its rough surface with glaring conspicuousness. As if to atone for its lack-luster surroundings, the rock monument was

patched about by green grass and one or two scraggly bushes, or small trees.

As the sight-seers gazed with awed curiosity at this relic of centuries, the driver,— a good-natured old man with bright, keen eyes, who had been greatly amused by the girls' sprightliness as they questioned about various sights on the ride from the depot,— told how the rock had lain undisturbed for over a century near the shore, of no special interest. In 1741, however, when it was proposed to build a wharf over it, there was some protest from the townspeople, until finally old Elder Faunce, ninety-five years old, was brought from his home in Duxbury to identify the rock as a relic of Pilgrim days.

"The old man claimed," said the driver, "that the rock had been pointed out to him by his father, who had come over to Plymouth from England in the fall of 1629. As the Elder was of an adult age when the Pilgrims lived, and as his mind was as clear as a bell, notwithstanding his age, there was no reason to doubt his word. However, the wharf-builders had their way, and the rock was hidden from public view like any common boulder until 1774, when everybody was talking about liberty and the men who had given it to us, whereupon it was removed to the town square and used as a support for a liberty pole. In 1834 it was taken and set up in the courtyard of Pilgrim Hall. In 1880 it was hoisted on a cart and brought back here,

cemented to the other half — the rock had split in half during the removal — and the canopy built over it."

The driver now took his departure somewhat reluctantly it would seem, as he gazed with interested eyes at the merry girls as they chattered about the rock. As the old carryall disappeared over the brow of the hill, Rona told of the incident of Mary Chilton making a bet with John Alden that she would be the first to step on the rock.

"But that is only a tradition, Rona," said the Best Beloved, "for, as a matter of fact, it is doubted if there was a general landing of the Pilgrims on Christmas Day at the time mentioned in history. Most of the women — it must have been cold and dismal — remained on board the ship, as there was no place to house them. The men came ashore first and spent some days in erecting the Common House and getting their homes started, before the women folks and children landed."

"Oh, Miss Marston, do not destroy that pretty little romance with such ruthlessness," cried Poco in a disappointed tone, "for we have always liked to think Mary Chilton was a forerunner of the typical American girl, noted for her progressiveness and pluck." And then she recited spiritedly:

"'Fair beams that kiss the sparkling bay,[1]
Rest warmest o'er her tranquil sleep.

[1] "Mary Chilton," by G. B. Griffith.

Sweet exile! love enticed away,—
The first on Plymouth Rock to leap!
Amid the timid flock she stood,
Rare figure near the *Mayflower's* prow
With heart of Christian fortitude,
And light heroic on her brow!'"

"Do you mean to say that lovely verse means nothing at all?" demanded Rona dolefully as Poco ended the lines. "Why, even if the *Mayflower* people did not land on Christmas Day, as history claims, I do not see why Mary and John could not have had their little race. Anyway," she asserted determinedly, "I am going to hold to my belief that Mary Chilton was the first woman to step on the shores of Plymouth town."

"Good for you, Rona!" chorused a number of voices; "we are with you!" While Margery added, "We will not have our dreams so rudely dispelled even if our Best Beloved is the awakener," linking her arm in Miss Marston's as she spoke. That lady, who was almost as young as the girls, if not in years, at least in spirit, smiled as she replied, "All right, girlies; cling to your idols, even if their feet are of clay."

"Well, I know one thing," whispered Peggy to Rona as the party turned to go up to the hotel. "I am going to have a piece of that rock to carry home with me as a souvenir."

"Well, I guess you'll have to borrow Thor's hammer to get it then," laughed Rona. And then she

turned and glanced at the green-mantled bluff facing the Rock, edged with a low stone wall at its base, and with stone steps leading to its summit. "Oh, girls," she cried, "this must be Cole's Hill!" A sudden silence followed the girl's exclamation as if in memory of those buried within the hill, and then Rona pointed to the hotel nestling among the trees on its top, crying, "We have come to the right hotel anyway, girls, the 'Plymouth Rock,' for see, it has run up the American flag as a welcome to us."

It was a tired lot of girls that evening, who, as the town clock struck nine, began to array themselves for peaceful slumber. There were a few minutes, however, when it seemed as if the Joy Girl's tears were very near the surface when she discovered that she was to sleep in a part of the house isolated from the party, for, unfortunately, the hotel being crowded, they had been glad to secure what accommodations they could.

Rona, who had been exercising a maternal interest in the usually happy girl, immediately suggested that she sleep on the couch in the room where she and Peggy were to bunk together. This solved the difficulty, and it was not long before they were all cozily tucked in.

It must have been somewhere about twelve that Rona awakened with a sudden strange feeling that roused her to a sitting position, when she discovered that her bedfellow was missing. Thinking she had wandered

into one of the girls' rooms on some errand or another, for one never knew what Peggy would be up to, Rona jumped out of bed. It was nearly twelve o'clock.

"Where can Peggy be?" she soliloquized anxiously as she hurriedly slipped into her kimono. She hastened into the hall, but a thorough search through the windings of the old-fashioned corridor, and the discovery that her friends were all wrapped in slumber, to judge from the quietness that prevailed, caused her to hurry back to her room, resolved to dress and go in search of the girl.

Hearing the Joy Girl as she stirred restlessly in her sleep, Rona shook her gently, and as she sat up in bed with eyes staring sleepily into the darkness, she told her of Peggy's disappearance.

As the girl finished there was a moment's stillness, and then a sudden exclamation. "Why, Joy Girl, what is the matter?" demanded perplexed Rona, laying her hand gently on the girl's head. "Do you know where she is?"

"No — er — why — Oh, Miss Rona, Miss Peggy told me —" choke — "that she — was going to steal out — to-night —" The sentence had ended in a sudden blank pause.

"Ann, do hurry and tell me!" almost screamed the now thoroughly exasperated Rona. "If you know where she is, tell me."

"I don't know where she — is — that is — oh —

she made me promise not to tell!" and the Joy Girl tumbled back on her pillow crying nervously.

But there was no need to say more, for Rona had surmised the rest, and with swift feet was flying down the stairway to the hall below. It was but a moment's work to open the big entrance-door leading into the office, and then she was swiftly making her way down North Street, and then on in a mad rush to the Rock, from where she now perceived the glimmer of something white. In a brief space of time she had gained the shrine, to see Peggy stretched on the Rock motionless and still, with a face as white as the gown she wore.

Rona, with a few frantic calls of "Peggy! Peggy!" darted swiftly around to the other side of the Rock, for she had suddenly remembered seeing the iron gate standing open when they had visited it earlier in the day. But alas, the iron gate was closed and locked, and no amount of pulling or pushing could budge it.

"Oh, how did she get in there?" burst from the mystified girl as she perceived this bar to relieving her friend. Then in a whirl it came to her that Peggy had found the gate closed, and with her usual determination to have her own way, had climbed over it and injured herself on those terrible black spikes, that to the girl's excited imagination looked like sharp-pointed knives.

"O dear!" she moaned; "what shall I do?" She stole back to her first position and peered through the iron railing at the figure lying so strangely still. Oh! Rona's heart gave a great leap, for on the white gown, not far from the motionless hand, she perceived a few small black spots. Was it blood? Oh, could it be that Peggy was dead?

The girl, driven to desperation, after calling Peggy until she was hoarse, began to climb the iron spikes. But she soon desisted, for she found it was an impossible feat.

At a loss what to do, for she hated to make a scene, knowing that as a rule Peggy was like the fabled cat with nine lives, for she always landed right side up, she stood a moment. Ah, she would run and awaken Miss Marston.

This decision was no sooner reached than she had turned and was tearing up the hill, her breath coming in gasps, for it seemed as if there were ton weights on her feet. As she tremblingly, with gasping breath pushed open the door of the office, her foot caught in the door mat and the next moment she would have fallen if the young man known as Mae's "rescuer," who had evidently been for a stroll in the moonlight with his older companion, had not caught her.

The next second, with eyes wild and troubled, Rona was telling of her friend lying down on the Rock, and begging them to go to her assistance. "Oh, I'm

afraid she's dead!" she moaned, as a few seconds later she followed the two gentlemen down the hill.

As she tremblingly joined them at the Rock, she saw that the younger man had flung off his coat and was vaulting over the iron fence. After a moment's survey of the white face, and feeling of the girl's pulse, he cried, "Oh, the girl's all right; she's just fainted. But," he muttered, loud enough for the two spectators to hear, "she has just about done for herself on these sharp spikes; there is blood all over her gown!"

As Rona uttered a sharp cry, the older man said reassuringly, "Don't worry, little girl; a faint won't hurt her, and we'll soon have her off the rock and over the fence."

But it was not an easy matter to lift a young girl five feet two with a goodly supply of flesh on her frame. Every time the young man would lift her she would stir and then fall back a dead weight against his arms.

However, Peggy was finally aroused by the aid of some smelling-salts that the Joy Girl, who had hurried down to see what had happened, had procured at Rona's direction. As she sat up big-eyed and white she protested that she could get over that fence herself. But she didn't, for when she realized that she was making trouble by her perverseness, she gave in, and was finally lifted over by the younger man, caught by his companion, and then placed on terra firma.

"Oh, Peggy, what were you trying to do?" gasped Rona, who, now that the danger was over, began to be a bit hysterical.

"Do?" repeated the girl dazedly. "Oh, I was trying"—and then suddenly realizing the part she had played in what might have been a sorry tragedy, she turned and flew up the incline as quickly as her strength would allow.

"Well, she's game, anyway," laughed the young gentleman as he gazed after the flying figure, but Rona, fearing that it might be noised about that the girl had been trying to steal a piece of the Rock, and at the same time remembering that she had heard her mother say that sometimes Peggy walked in her sleep, cried hastily, "Oh, my friend must have been walking in her sleep!"

But seeing by the humorous gleam in the eyes of the older man, and the broad grin on the face of the younger one, that really there was no excuse to offer for the girl, she exclaimed with a long-drawn sigh, "Oh, Peg is the greatest girl; she is always getting into scrapes; but please," she falteringly coaxed, "do not say anything about it, for she will be dreadfully ashamed when she comes to think what she has done."

Rona's plea was immediately met with a warm assurance from the two gentlemen that they would do their best to keep the matter quiet. The older man added with a slight smile, "After all, the child was

only doing what many a tourist tries to do when he first visits the boulder, and that is to chip off a piece as a remembrance. But I think," he added a little anxiously, "that we ought to hurry up to the house and see that her wound is bandaged, as it struck me that she had a bad bruise on her arm."

After Rona and the Joy Girl had awakened Miss Marston, who hastily dressed and then hurried to Peggy, the older gentleman, who proved to be a physician, and who had kindly offered his assistance, came and bound the wounded arm. When he was received by Miss Marston, Rona wondered at this lady's strange confusion, but as she quickly turned and directed the gentleman's attention to his patient the little incident was forgotten. The next morning, when, pale and interesting-looking,— her arm in a sling,— Peggy appeared, she was in for a lecture from the Best Beloved, who felt that she should be rebuked for her escapade, as she declared she had no patience with vandalism.

She made no reply to Miss Marston's reprimand, only shrugged her shoulders rebelliously, with a defiant glance at the girls. Presently her sense of right prevailed, however, and with demure mien she contritely begged that lady's pardon, not only for her misdemeanor, but for the trouble and anxiety she had caused her friend Rona. There was no resisting her tremulous repentance, and the witchery of her blue

eyes, so that with a warm kiss from the Best Beloved Peggy's adventure was a thing of the past.

After Peggy and Rona had rested for a space Judith suggested that they walk down North Street to the wharf and see if they could not secure a man to take them over to Clark's Island that afternoon. "For I think," she added emphatically, "that we should take the Pilgrim Footsteps in turn, and if I remember rightly we left our sixteen valiant men-at-arms over on Clark's Island."

This suggestion met with approval, and the girls started for the wharf. On their way down they met a small boy with a basket, who shyly uncovered his wares, an assortment of handy things for the housewife. Peggy, spying a box of lollypops, cried hilariously, "Hurrah, girls! here's something we can buy."

In a short time the small boy was climbing the hill, his eyes beaming happily as he clutched two silver quarters, while glancing back ever and anon at the girls who were on their way towards the wharf.

"You girls certainly don't look as if you were on knowledge bent," sarcastically ventured Judith a minute or so later, as she disgustedly eyed her companions, who were seated in a row on a wharf beam overlooking the water, each one contentedly sucking a lollypop. Judith was the only one whose dignity forbade her to be a "sticky one." But her scathing rebuke was ignored as the girls began to question

Peggy and Rona as to the adventure on the Rock.

Suddenly Judith, glancing down the wharf, gave a start; then, with a twinkle of fun in her brown eyes, she turned towards the American Footsteppers crying, "Look, girls!"

And the girls looked to see that they were undone, for coming down the wharf was Miss Marston, accompanied by the young gentleman and his older companion, who had so kindly come to Peggy's aid the night before. Peggy reddened furiously, while Rona was tempted to wish that a Zeppelin would suddenly appear and divert the newcomers' attention, so as to give her a chance to dispose of her now undesirable sweets.

But no such catastrophe occurred. Instead, Peggy, with her usual sang-froid, after the gentlemen had been duly presented as Dr. Wayne and his nephew, Mr. Donald Wayne, slipped her hand into the pocket of her sweater and produced an extra lollypop. This she politely offered to the younger gentleman, as she asked if he would not join them in their lollypop feast?

CHAPTER IX

PILGRIM FOOTSTEPS

TO the girls' surprise he politely lifted his hat, and assured her that nothing would please him better. And then he, too, was seated on the wharf beam sucking his candy stick with as much complacency as a youngster of three.

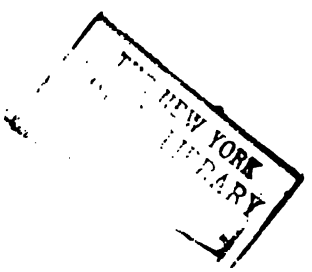
Naturally the lollypop was an inspirer of chumminess, after Peggy in her "very best manner," as one of the girls defined it, had thanked Mr. Wayne for his timely rescue of the evening before. She was very happy, she assured him, to know his name, and then naïvely added that he should be glad, too, for otherwise he would have gone down to posterity by the name of "Mae's Rescuer."

This not only seemed to amuse him, but his uncle as well, who joined in the laugh that followed, as Donald with quick thought said he was indeed glad, for now perhaps he might have the pleasure of being known as "Peggy's Rescuer." This change of terms — somewhat to the embarrassment of the young lady, who was inwardly racking her brains as to how he came to know her name — was received with much laughter. And then the merry banter that followed



NATURALLY THE LOLLYPOP WAS AN INSPIRER OF CHUMMINESS.—*Page 144.*




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showed that " Peggy's Rescuer " was able to hold his own.

Dr. Wayne and Miss Marston, meantime, had walked a few steps away, and, while apparently staring down into the water lapping the piles of the wharf, fell to discussing something so animatedly that Rona wondered if they had not met before.

It was not long before the young man had learned all about the Daughters of America and the object of their travels in the Pilgrim community. He, too, he said, was cramming, as he and his uncle had determined to do just what the girls were doing, study American history at close range.

A half hour later the American Footsteppers, with Dr. Wayne and his nephew, who had managed to secure a couple of motor-launches, embarked for the four-mile sail across the harbor to Clark's Island.

The sail was a most enjoyable one to the girls. The jutting headlands, the twin lighthouses on Gurnet Point, the gleaming shaft on Captain's Hill, which young Wayne explained was on a promontory, which with Clark's Island made a beautiful inlet, and lastly, the island itself, although previously studied from the mainland,— all called forth a keener interest when viewed from the little boat. But here they were at the " Restful Isle," as Peggy called the little stretch of soil on which the *Mayflower* explorers had drifted in the storm and darkness of the night.

After alighting at the little pier they found it was but a short stroll to the island's highest point, where Pulpit Rock, a large boulder said to be twelve feet wide, marked the site where the Pilgrims held open-air services the morning following the night they were almost shipwrecked by the wind, rain, and sleet.

On its surface was the inscription

ON THE SABBATH DAY
WE RESTED,

which Dr. Wayne said had been taken from "Mourt's Relation," a short history of the colony written by Bradford, which reads: "In the morning they find the place to be a small island secure from the Indians. And this being the last day of the week, they here bring their stuff, fix their pieces, rest themselves, return thanks to God for their many deliverances and here the next day keep the Christian Sabbath."

As the party started to return to the boats, the doctor said, "What a different scene from the one that faces us must have stretched before the voyagers the next morning — Monday — as they sailed across the harbor to explore the mainland.

"We see a thickly populated town, with trim little houses dotting the terrace of Cole's Hill, and a long wharf and warehouses facing the harbor, while taller buildings and a church spire or so, thrust themselves against the sky, the usual features of a harbor town.

"They saw a stretch of woodland, strips of sandy beaches - - possibly white with snow — on the one side, and on the other they heard the roar of the breakers as they dashed on the headland, and faced trackless waters of the deep, with its recent associations of sickness and a long weary voyage. Cheerlessness and desolation must have gripped their hearts keenly at the magnitude of the task before them. But there is no intimation of this in their records,— just the simple statement that they explored the mainland, were undecided as to locating on the Jones River, at what is now Kingston, or at Plymouth. This latter port was their final decision, no doubt on account of the 'sweete waters' of the town brook on the hillside, which, as you know, had its beginnings in the famed Billington Sea."

On the return to the wharf, with the determination to follow in the footsteps of the Pilgrims, after another study of the Rock, Peggy with young Wayne led the way up the historic slope, Leyden Street, with the girls close behind, and Miss Marston and the older gentleman following slowly in the rear.

A brown gabled frame house backed sideways on the left of the street was soon reached, on which a wooden tablet and a rude drawing of the original structure told it had been built on the site of the Common House, the first building erected by the Pilgrims. "It had been successively used as a storehouse, a barracks, a hospital," remarked the doctor, as they all

came to a halt in front of it, "and for general occupancy, probably while the men were building the seven little houses that neighbored it on the side."

"It was only twenty feet square," read Judith from her guide-book, "and was made of hewn logs with mortar or mud plastered between the chinks, and thatched, and all the other houses were built the same way."

"Yes, the seven little houses in a row," nodded the doctor, "but can any one repeat what Longfellow says about the historic seven?"

"'Till he beheld the lights in the seven houses[1] of Plymouth,
Shining like seven stars in the dusk and mist of the evening,'"

Poco softly repeated.

"The street was named Leyden after the city the colonists had left in Holland," continued the doctor; "and probably for the same reason the houses were built in a row, the head of each of the nineteen families having cast his lot for the choice of a plot of ground called a *meetstead*. The plots were staked according to the size of a man's family, each family building their own home."

The walk up that little slope was long to be remembered by Rona, tempered as it was with the soft little breezes blowing from the sun-gleaming harbor, and toned by the cloudless blue of the canopy above. To be sure, the humble little homes that lined the

[1] "The Courtship of Myles Standish," by H. W. Longfellow.

famous street were variegated in material, as some were brick and others wooden, and of no particular architecture, as a sloping roof with a chimney thrust to the fore was seen clinging with parasitic friendliness to some higher-roofed structure that towered above it with brotherly protection. Nevertheless there was a quaint and homey atmosphere about them that attracted the girl, as they glimmered brown, yellow, and even a glaring red, between the swaying boughs of the noble old trees that sentineled the brick sidewalks.

But they had now come to the summit of the hilly street, and after a glance back, down the historic first roadway leading from the harbor, they found they were in Town Square, facing the Memorial Church, which was backed up against a grassy slope with steps at the side, leading to Burial Hill. After they had noted the beauty of the ancient elms that shaded the square, the tall building on the corner of Main Street where the house of Governor Bradford had once stood, and the site of the first little meeting-house, they turned and read the placard on the church telling that it was a descendant of the Separatist church at Scrooby,—an interesting fact to know, Dr. Wayne declared, as they hurried up the little steps to the cemetery, where rested so many of those whose footsteps they were marking. Not far from these steps the doctor located a little oval marble block on a pedestal, which marked

the site of the Pilgrims' watch tower, erected in 1643, over the hearth-stone where the watch-fires blazed to the settlers a warning of coming danger. Another oval block marked where the first fort stood, which for eighteen years was not only a fortress but the Pilgrims' house of worship.

"It is said," went on their informer, "that the *Mayflower* company started to build the Common House on Christmas Day, and that a few days later the fort was begun. It was built of logs, with a flat, square roof, which, it is claimed by the good Bradford, fairly bristled with artillery."

The gentleman smiled as he explained that the artillery consisted of "a saker, a preacher who speaks to the purpose,"— to quote our American poet,— and a minion, a falcon, and two bases, all with their mouths ready to belch forth "straightforward logic" right into the heart of the enemy.

"Ah, I hear the beat of a drum, for the men to assemble. Now they stand each man with a musket or firelock in front of the captain's house!" The doctor had broken so abruptly into dramatic description, as he stood gazing down the hillside, that the girls involuntarily faced quickly about, expecting to see the little company of Pilgrim soldiers in their battle array. Rona, however, had caught a give-away gleam in the gentleman's eye as he sighted this mental vision, so that she was not disturbed.

"They place themselves in order," he continued, "three abreast. Now comes the word of command, and off they march, led by the sergeant without beat of drum. Behind comes the governor, and on his right marches the elder, sable-cloaked, somber of garb, with a face of benignant severity, while on his left is the doughty little Captain Standish, with his side-arms on and his cloak fluttering in the breeze. Now the muster is over, and back they march down the hill. Each company escorts its captain to his door, fires a salute, faces about, and marches forward. This was the military training of the first army of the United States, under discipline maintained in military tactics by the hardy leaders."

"Oh, your uncle's a dear!" cried Peggy to young Wayne; "for really I could see the whole thing as he described it, and felt just like marching on behind, the way the small boys do when they sight a band of music in the street."

"Yes, he's a good sport," admitted the youth with a smile in appreciation of this praise from the lips of such a comely young girl. "He's got the whole thing down fine, too, and has made my trip up here a tiptop one." And then he grew a little more confidential and informed Peggy on several points about which her young mind had been curiously wondering.

As the party turned to walk further into the cemetery, where ancient giant trees rustled their leaves

with a gentle murmur, as if in reverent memory of those at rest beneath their shade, Betty touched Rona gently on the arm.

"Oh, Rona!" she cried; "Isadore Briedel is crying!" The voice of the Bird of Peace was sadly troubled.

"Crying!" echoed Judith sharply, who was walking by the side of Rona. "Why, what is she weeping about?"

"Why, the idea of her crying here before all of these people," spoke up Margery in a disgusted tone.

"But she has not cried for ever so long," pleaded poor Betty, excusingly; "not once since we have been on the trip."

But Rona with a quick movement had hurried back to the steps, where she saw two or three of the girls standing by Isadore, who was making frantic dabs at her face, while keeping it turned from the gaze of the girls.

"Come, dearie," whispered Rona's voice cheerily in her ear, as the girl with filmed eyes and hands tightly clenched stood looking towards the square. "Let's walk on, for I think we ought not to visit this somber old place to-day. I think it would be much better to wait until we have visited the places where the Pilgrims lived and were happy first." As she spoke she linked her arm in that of Isadore's and gently directed her down the steps.

"Pardon me, Miss Rona," pleaded the girl contritely in a choked voice. "Oh — I am most sorry to spoil the young ladies' pleasure, but when I saw those white tombstones — it made me think of those terrible black crosses "— a gulp —" I saw on the battlefields of France. Oh, I am most ashamed to weep so much that you all see the tears."

"It is all right," sympathized Rona, who had intuitively divined what the trouble was. Then she began to chatter, first about one thing and then another, so as to give the Belgian girl time to resume her usual poise. She had learned from her close companionship with the refugee during the last few weeks that she possessed a most affectionate nature, and that her emotions were easily affected,— and why should they not be from the terrible experiences that had so recently come into her life? And coupled with the emotional nature was a certain pride, an innate reserve that made her suffer extremely, whenever she indulged in a bit of weeping.

An hour later, with Isadore safe in the keeping of Miss Marston and the doctor, who were conversing on the veranda of the hotel, Rona and Judith strolled to a clump of trees on Cole's Hill a few feet away, to look with serious intentness at a flat stone tablet raised a foot or so from the ground. Dropping on their knees they bent forward and slowly read the following inscription:

On this hill
The Pilgrims
Who died the first winter
were buried.
This Tablet
marks the spot where
lies the body of one found
Oct. 8th. 1883. The body of
another found on the 27th
of the following month
lies eight feet northeast of
the westerly corner
of this stone
Erected 1884.

Judith beckoned to the girls, who were lingering on the path, and as she pointed to the weather-stained old slab again — this time very softly — read the inscription. The girls, awed into reverent quietness as they realized that this slab marked the noted resting-place of many of the Pilgrims, studied it silently. As they seated themselves on the bench under a tree, and gazed off over the harbor Rona seemed to see the *Mayflower,* gently rocking to and fro as she lay at anchor in the bay.

"I see from the guide-book," said the historian, "that forty-four of the Pilgrims died from the fatal sickness shortly after landing and were buried on this hill. In the spring it was leveled and planted with corn, so that the savages might not suspect that the number of colonists had dwindled to almost half."

"What was the fatal sickness?" demanded one of the girls. "I have often wondered."

"Why, I suppose fever from the crowded ship," answered Judith, "and the scurvy, and illnesses contracted from exposure to the cold and wet."

"How sad it is to think," ruminated Rona, "that so many of those brave people, who had endured so much for conscience' sake, and who longed for the new land so intensely as a place of refuge, only reached it to rest in an unknown grave on a little hill."

"I think that the descendants of the Pilgrims must have forgotten that their ancestors were buried on Cole's Hill," remarked Judith; "for I have read that they were puzzled when, in 1735, during a heavy storm, a portion of this hill was washed away and several skeletons were exposed to view. The next century, in digging a cellar, another skeleton was found. Ugh! think of living over a graveyard!" The girl shuddered. "And then in 1855 some more bones were found while some men were digging a trench. These bones were interred in the top of the canopy over the Rock, while those found near the tablet were buried in a brick vault beneath it."

Silence fell on the little group, each one perhaps saddened by these rather grewsome details. Suddenly Margery, whose thoughts evidently had followed a different line, cried, "Oh, girls, I've the dandiest

idea; I was inspired while up in that old cemetery. Do you want to hear it?"

Of course the girls wanted to hear it, and as Margery began to reveal her plan, many questions were asked, and there were nods of approval and one or two additions to the "dandiest idea."

"I think," went on Margery enthusiastically, "that we ought to specially honor the pioneer women,— I mean the *Mayflower* women,— for you know they had so many hardships to endure." The girls smiled in recognition that their companion was so keenly interested in the heroic women whose virtues she was trying to emulate that, as Peggy declared, she forgot sometimes that other women had done as brave deeds.

"Yes," continued Margery with a note of decision in her voice, "people are always talking about the Pilgrim men, but this celebration is to be just for the women; there is not to be a man mentioned."

"And why not have some kind of a celebration where we can use lighted candles?" urged Poco suddenly. "The Girl Scouts often use them when they take the Scout promise. For you know," she continued thoughtfully, "a lighted candle symbolizes the spirit of love, the light of truth, and the fire of enthusiasm — and I am sure love to God, love of the truth — yes, and enthusiasm must have fired the Pilgrims — oh, I think it would be lovely!"

But her voice suddenly lowered, for just at that

instant Donald was seen walking down the path from the hotel, towards the clump of trees where the girls were sitting. But evidently he was not thinking of honoring any one just at that particular moment, but of having a jolly time with his newly made girl friends, as he quickly proposed, if they were not too tired, that they visit Pilgrim Hall.

No, the girls were not too tired, and in a few moments they were on their way to the hall on Main Street. After inspecting the Greek temple, as Peggy called Plymouth's little building devoted to the keeping of its ancient relics, they hurried to the iron railing at the side of the courtyard, which had once encircled Forefathers' Rock. Here they read the names of the forty-one signers of the *Mayflower* Compact, and then hastened into the hall.

"Oh, I say, girls," burst from Poco, as they entered the large, square room, with its rows of glass cases filled with ancient relics, and various articles of antique furniture behind a rope towards the front of the hall, "let's do the walls first. We'll get all the paintings and portraits out of the way and then we can tackle the things in the cases."

This was voted a happy idea, and so, led by Judith, who was primed with a guide-book, with Donald at her side, they began an inspection of the pictures and photographs of Plymouth, one or two scions of royalty, and a few of America's great men. As they

came to the "Landing of the Pilgrims," by Sargent, they all looked somewhat puzzled, and one or two questioned why the Pilgrims were greeted by an Indian when they stepped ashore.

"Well, I presume," remarked Poco dryly, "that that Indian is intended for Samoset, the red man who appeared one fine morning on the village street crying, 'Welcome, Englishmen, welcome!' Only he has appeared ahead of time, from a rather too progressive imagination on the part of the artist, I presume."

"If I remember rightly," interposed Donald, "Samoset was the Indian guide who, when the Pilgrims were giving him something to eat, demanded beer."

"Ah, he must have been with the renowned Squanto when he was kidnapped by Captain Hunt," said the Best Beloved laughingly, "and evidently had learned to like the white man's fire-water."

"But he didn't get the beer," chimed in Rona in reply to Donald's surmise, "for the Pilgrims had none left. Nevertheless he was housed for the night in Stephen Hopkins's house, and a watch set over him, and then later he was presented with a ring, a bracelet, and a knife."

"He was the Indian, wasn't he?" queried the little Joy Girl, "who brought Squanto and the great Indian chief Massasoit to see the Pilgrims?"

As Judith nodded in reply there was a cry from Peggy, who had suddenly spied the portrait of Dan-

iel Webster. "Come, Rona," she called out eagerly, "here's a great American; we must do the salute!"

Another moment and the two girls had lined up in front of the portrait of New England's foremost statesman and were making the military salute as they repeated in unison,

"All honor to thee, America's son,
To mankind thy best thou most freely gave.
The laurels of fame thou hast nobly won,
We crown thee as great, noble, and brave!"

CHAPTER X

SKIPPEREE TO THE RESCUE

AS the two girls turned from paying this little tribute to Webster, they found that Donald, Miss Marston, and the doctor were applauding, the doctor adding the loud cry of "Bravo! Bravo!" Then the girls surrounded them, and, with eyes curiously alert, cried out in surprise, "Why, how did you come to think of that salute?"

"And who made up the verse?" questioned Poco in an aggrieved tone, as if she thought that some one had been poaching on her domain.

"I did," returned Rona boldly, "although I have not the honor of being the club rhymester," bowing ceremoniously to Poco.

But Peggy, with a thrill of glee in her voice, while her eyes danced jubilantly, cried: "Oh, girls, this is the time we left you all in the cold. It all came from Rona's suggestion at the first club meeting, when she said she thought we should study about all those great Americans who had helped to make America great. So the first thing an idea popped into my head. I told Rona about it, and then we two girls sneaked off

to the Hall of Fame on University Heights to see America's great ones,— that is, all that have been placed. Well, then we made up our minds that if we were going on this trip, we should do honor to all great Americans. I suggested the salute, and Rona made up the rhyme. Now wasn't it great?"

That her hearers agreed with Peggy was proved, for she and Rona were immediately in demand, as each one of the girls wanted to be initiated into this new ceremony, which the doctor assured them with cordial heartiness was most commendable. "I shall be much interested in this club of progressive American lassies, and hope some day to learn that you have done great things."

"As placing a monument in memory of some great one, or a tablet over some historic place, as all the patriotic societies seem to do," added Donald teasingly.

"That's just what we intend to do some day, see if we don't," came from Mae, whose aims were high.

"And we'll invite you as one of the honorables to be present and to make a speech," nodded Peggy. "You can tell reminiscences of meeting the club, 'the Daughters of America,' and —"

"And sit on the platform and feel very proud of having known such a distinguished set of ladies," added Poco laughingly.

Donald, with a low bow, and a wave of his hat, gallantly declared that he would be most happy to make

a speech; he would tell about the Rock and the young lady who — Peggy frowned at him — only they would have to wait until —

"You get a mustache," suggested Rona mischievously; "or —"

"Oh, I know," interposed the undaunted Peggy; "he wants to wait until he is a full-fledged lieutenant with brass buttons, epaulets, and all the rest of an officer's regalia."

Whereupon Donald grew red, and tried to silence the young lady for this betrayal of his confidences. But Peggy, determined to be even with the young gentleman for trying to tease her, turned to the girls, and to their surprise informed them that Mr. Donald Wayne was a cadet at West Point, a second-classman on a furlough, and in a couple of years might be heading a regiment.

Cries and congratulations came from the girls, while one or two of the bolder ones made an immediate demand that he present them with a souvenir of their meeting, and send them a brass button. Donald, with some embarrassment, assured them he would be pleased to favor them, but if he did, he would have a buttonless uniform, and fail of being the honor man of his class, a distinction he was desirous of gaining.

But the time was limited, so after inspecting several pictures portraying scenes in the lives of the Pilgrims, and making a salute to the portraits of Washington

and Henry Clay, by all the girls this time, they halted in front of the Winslow group of portraits.

"Oh, it's an original," burst from Poco, as she gazed at the portrait of the statesman of the Plymouth colony, Edward Winslow. Every one was much interested in the fine, scholarly face of the young governor, for the placard stated that he had held that position from 1633 to 1636, and again in 1644, and that he died and was buried at sea in 1655.

"Yes," commented the doctor, "Winslow was sent on several commissions to England, and at the time of his death had accepted service under Cromwell. On an expedition to the West Indies he caught a fever, and died on board ship. He belonged to a distinguished English family, and was a very cultured, kindly man. He married Elizabeth Barker at Leyden; I believe she was a member of the little community. But unfortunately their happiness was brief, for she died of the fatal sickness, and shortly after he married Susannah White."

"I should think it was shortly after," interposed Judith in an aggrieved tone,—"only a month or so, as her husband had also died of the sickness that first winter. She was the mother of the little Peregrine White; yes, and she was the first bride of the colony."

The reddish-gold hair and quaint face of Penelope Winslow, the wife of Josiah, the son of Edward, in her low-necked pink gown attracted the girls' atten-

tion. Rona wondered if she was the lady whose fair hands had planted the trees in front of the stately mansion on North Street, as rumor stated, said house having won many an admiring glance as they had strolled by, on account of its old-timeliness.

Peggy, coming up at this moment,— she had been over in a corner making it up with Donald for telling tales on him, as he declared,— and quickly noting the somber garb of the Puritan governor, with his long hair, his turned-over white collar, and the rows of buttons on his coat, immediately began, " Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief —" But alas! she had barely spoken the opprobrious word " thief," when Margery rudely dragged the girls away to one of the glass cases to show them other reminders of the historic Winslows. These were a dainty pair of yellow slippers and a white silk cape with a hood, which Rona read had belonged to the lovely Susannah, the governor's wife.

" Ah, it is claimed," remarked Poco, " that there is nothing romantic about the lives of the early settlers of America. Every one knows how they are slurred over in American school history, and yet the fair Susannah could have done the stellar rôle in a thrilling silent drama. First, as the wife of William White, — no one seems to know who he was,— and then famed as the mother of the first white child born in the colony. Alas! she soon finds herself a widow with

two small children dependent upon her. Presto! the scene changes; the cultured Edward, a handsome widower, is caught by the charms of the fair widowed lady, and lo! our fair Susannah is the first bride of the *Mayflower* company. Another flash on the screen, and we see her, a few years later, the stately dame, Madame Susannah Winslow, wife of the governor of the colony."

But Rona, lured by the slippers and cape, was wondering whether if the wearer could return and gaze at them again they would not bring cherished memories of the grandeur of stately occasions, when, with comely graciousness and fine dignity, she did the honors of the first lady of the land.

The Compact, worn and faded with age, was now read with due solemnity, while Governor Bradford's Bible, ink-stained and time-worn, deposited in a safe near the door, was examined with reverent awe. While Rona was exclaiming over the fragment of a blue silk quilt strewn with apple blossoms, tenderly stored in a gilt and oaken frame, she was reminded of its owner, the sweet English Rose. The girl's face saddened as her eyes again saw in a mental reading "Jan 29 dies Rose, the wife of Captain Standish."

But here was another pathetic appeal from dainty young fingers,—a little Puritan maiden's sampler with its deft, precise stitches. Then Rona was repeating softly the quaint little verse that told:

"'Lorea Standish is my name.
Lord guide my heart that I may doo thy will;
Also fill my hands with such convenient skill
As may conduce to virtue void of shame;
And I will give the glory to thy name.'"

It was such a sad remainder of the childlike faith and simple reverence of a young heart, so soon to give the glory to the name she had hallowed, that Rona's eyes filled with tears. She was about to turn away, when Peggy, with a mischievous gleam in her blue eyes, pulled her by the arm and begged her to come and see the most realistic relic in the room.

With some curiosity Rona allowed herself to be dragged to Case B, where, with grisly hideousness, reposed "the teeth from a skeleton of one of the Pilgrims, buried on Cole's Hill in the winter of 1620!"

One look sufficed for Rona, and then with flashing eyes she was crying, "Oh, Peggy, I think you are just horrid!" But when that young lady, who liked to play at shocking Rona's sensibilities, declared she only wanted to remind her that they might have belonged to the fair Rose, Rona's anger exceeded bounds. Seizing the merry girl, she was in the act of giving her a good shaking when Donald came to her rescue and demanded the cause of the disturbance.

The girls by this time had gathered about them, and, on learning of Peggy's prank, laughed merrily, although Judith, somewhat disgusted, carried Rona away

to bind up her wounded feelings with her usual sweet consolation.

Rona, however, was not through with the Standish case, and the two girls were soon examining the captain's wonderful sword, with its engraved figures of the sun, moon, and stars, and Arabic inscription. The little attached paper said that this sword was of very ancient Persian manufacture, a Dharban weapon made of meteoric iron. It was claimed by the Orientals to possess the virtue of bringing good luck to its owner.

"The Arab historians," stated Rona, "claimed that the prophet Mohammed and his successors were armed with swords of like kind, and that all they had to do when fighting was to grasp the sword, face the enemy, and the good-luck charm would do the rest."

"Humph!" remarked Judith. "Perhaps it was the charm of this ancient blade, with its strange emblems, that made the little captain so fortunate in his warlike exploits."

"Ah, but you forget, Jude," returned Rona, "that Priscilla refused him. Surely that wasn't lucky."

"Pooh! just a mere incident in the little man's life, not really worth making all the pother that Longfellow did about it," returned Judith; "for did he not immediately turn about and marry Rose's sister, or cousin Barbara,— accounts differ,— and let me whisper, friend, 'tis claimed that there was not a happier couple in all New England."

And so these relic-seekers continued from one case to another, until Rona declared that coins, uninteresting musty documents, letters, and deeds were all mixed hodge-podge fashion in her brain. But the call from first one of the party and then the other was imperative, all declaring that they had found some very particular thing they wanted her to see, until, finally breaking away from them, she hurried over to the colonial furniture on exhibition in the front part of the room.

Certainly she was glad that she was still able, after all this spying and peering, to appreciate Governor Winslow's oak chair, the old Dutch cradle owned by Elder Brewster, and the lullaby cradle of the little Peregrine White. The Fuller cradle, Myles Standish's chest, and another chair,— there were chairs galore,— and then Rona declared that she had enough of things colonial and was going out for a bit of sunshine and fresh air.

"Yes," chimed in Peggy with a dolorous sigh; "I have looked at porringers, trenchers, tankards, and plates until I know the silver service of the Pilgrim Fathers as well as the alphabet."

"I'm with you, Peg," joined in Poco. "If any of you girls ever mention such a thing as an ancient candle-stick, a sampler, or a *Mayflower* christening blanket to me again, I shall flee from you as a thing bewitched."

As it was generally conceded that they were all tired, the girls started for the door. Here, however, they were confronted by Judith, who said she had been looking at pipes and other Indian relics, and had copied a design on a wampum belt for a Fire Maker's bracelet, as she wanted to try for a Camp Fire honor. "But come, girls," she added hastily; "I want you to see a little statuette of old Massasoit in the library."

Reluctantly the girls obeyed the call of their leader and were soon gazing with some curiosity at a table with a walnut top, whose placard read, "Used to stand in the Council chamber when Winslow was governor," on which stood the little image of the Indian chieftain who had proved such a good friend to the colonists.

"He was the old Indian, if you remember," explained Judith, "who came with Samoset one day, appearing at the top of the hill near the 'towne brooke,' with a retinue of sixty warriors. His kind treatment by the Pilgrims resulted in the making of the agreement that was never broken during the lifetime of the Indian sagamore."

"'So the treaty was made, and the treaty was kept[1]
For fifty years and four;
The white man wrought, and waked, and slept,
Secure on the Eastern shore;
From the door of his hut old Massasoit
Noted their swift increase,
And blessed the day he had sent that way
His messenger of peace.'"

[1] "The Peace Message," by B. C. Stevenson.

Every eye was on Poco, who somehow was always filling in awkward gaps in the conversation by these little verses, that added just a bit of atmosphere and tone to the things presented.

"Was not this the old chieftain whom Winslow visited when he was almost dying, and whom he cured?" inquired Margery.

"Yes," nodded Judith. "Winslow took a little confection — probably a sugar pill — on the point of his knife and gently forced it between the patient's teeth. This the old Indian managed to swallow, and after Winslow had cleaned his tongue and he had taken a little more of the sweets he grew better."

"Right-o!" added Donald, who had just joined them; "and poor Winslow was in for it, for the old Indian insisted that he clean the tongues and the mouths of all the sick Indians in the village."

"Did he do it?" giggled Peggy, "or did he betake himself to parts unknown?"

"Oh, he did it, all right," answered young Wayne, with a humorous smile, "for Winslow was a gallant old Puritan. Like a true Samaritan, he did the whole cleaning business up fine, although it could not have been a very enjoyable task, for the Indians and their tents were filthy with dirt and squalor. But come, girls," he added hastily, "I want you to see the ruins of old *Sparrowhawk*, for in my estimation it is the best antique in the whole bunch."

"Oh, it's a boat!" exclaimed one of the girls in a disappointed tone, as they stood in the lower hall looking at the bottom timbers of an ancient vessel, which Donald characterized as deserving of as great fame as the *Mayflower,* for it was almost as old.

"Bradford tells us about it in his history," said Donald. "It was driven on Cape Cod during a storm in 1626." His eyes lingered tenderly on the old hulk, that Peggy declared looked somewhat like a bird denuded of its feathers, with its framework supported as near its original position as possible.

"It lay buried in the sand until 1863," read Rona from the placard attached to it, "when it was dug up. The rudder was presented by John Doane. John Doane," she repeated mechanically; "yes, that is the name — presented by John Doane. Oh, Judith!" she whispered excitedly. "See that name! Why, it is mine."

"Yours?" repeated the mystified Judith. "How did your name come on that thing?" But suddenly sighting the name on the placard, John Doane, she understood.

"Well, that looks as if you belonged to some one," she remarked musingly. "Pity it didn't tell where we could find the said John Doane."

Rona bent down and examined the rudder carefully, in the hope of seeing some writing; but no! there was no clew in regard to the giver. With a sigh she

turned to follow the girls, who had started for the stairs leading to the main floor, some in merry teasing mood, while others, more seriously disposed, told of the things among the relics that had interested them the most. Suddenly Rona remembered that she had not looked on the under part of that rudder. She would go back and take a hurried peep. Possibly —

A moment later she was down on her knees, trying to see under the rudder; but no! there was nothing to be seen. With a sigh she again studied the name on the placard, "John Doane." Oh, if she could only find out where the man lived, she might — But she *must* hurry, for the girls would be gone.

As she reached the top step of the stairway leading to the floor above, she softly gave the musical "Wohelo" Camp Fire call that she had learned of Judith, as a signal for the girls to wait for her. Then her heart gave a sudden leap, for the old custodian who generally sat behind the desk in the office, was missing. A few hurried steps, while a strange foreboding that something was wrong assailed her, and she hurried into the vestibule to find it strangely dark, for the big entrance-door was closed. With a quick movement she grasped the knob, to find this door locked. For a second she stood in bewildered surprise, and then, as she realized that not only all of the party had gone, but that the custodian had locked up for the night, she grabbed the door and shook it violently, while calling

with loud, shrill cries for some one to let her out; but the clang of a near-by trolley was the only response. Again and again she called, beating and pounding the door until her hands ached, but alas! it was like beating against the proverbial stone wall, for her efforts proved of no avail.

Finally, forced to see the futility of her screams and bangs, she desisted, but, determined to keep up her grit, she exclaimed, "Oh, what is the use of my making all this racket, for surely the girls will miss me in a moment and hurry back!" Turning away from the door, she reëntered the office, and, seating herself on the chair behind the custodian's desk with attempted nonchalance, began humming a snatch of melody from a new song that she had heard a short time before.

All at once she felt something pressing against her skirt. She gave a shrill scream, for her nerves were keenly alert, and jumped up. But a second glance caused her to laugh hysterically, for there sat Skipperee on his haunches by the chair, his red tongue hanging out of his mouth like a flag, and his shining coal-like eyes looking at her as much as to say, "Why, what makes you so unfriendly?"

"Oh, you dearest, darlingest doggie!" cried the relieved girl, taking the shiny, satiny body up in her arms and hugging it close. "And so they went off and left you, too?"

She sat down with the dog on her lap, stroking it tenderly. Well, she would have company, even if she had to stay all night in that building with those musty old relics. Suddenly her face brightened. Ah, perhaps — She picked the dog up and started for a tour of the halls, for possibly there might be some other way of exit. But her search was fruitless. She hurried down to the floor below and examined the doors, but with the same result. Yes, she was a prisoner. She bent and laid her cheek against the satiny coat of her companion, who was snuggling contentedly in her arms. A lick of a red tongue across her cheek gave her a slight comfort. Ah, there was a window open! It was very high up in the wall — still she might manage to climb up. Oh, it was barred! A wail of despair escaped her. What should she do? Her eyes fell on Skipperee, who was licking her hand, and then they widened, while a sudden flash lightened their shadows. "Oh, I know what I will do!" she almost screamed. In another moment she had placed Skipperee on a chair near, and was fumbling in the little bag which always hung from her wrist.

CHAPTER XI

"LOANED BY MARGARET DOANE OF SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS"

IN a moment she found her purse. Hurriedly extracting a card from it, she scribbled with a stub of a pencil:

"I am locked up in Pilgrim Hall. 7 P. M. Rona Hillis of Plymouth Rock Hotel."

She turned to Skipperee, but that lively animal was prowling under glass cases and odd pieces of colonial furniture in a very irreverent manner. He was quickly captured, and then Rona found to her dismay that she had no way of fastening the card to him.

But she was not thwarted, and after searching among a lot of old spinning-wheels huddled in one corner, she pulled off enough flax from one of the distaffs to bind it into a string strong enough to tie the card to the dog's collar. After dragging an old rickety antique chair near the open window, she pushed the dog through the bars, crying loudly, "Home, Skipperee! Home, sir!"

The dog, thus ruthlessly ejected, settled on his

haunches in front of the window and stared at her in mild surprise. "Oh, he wants me to come, too; he can't understand!" wailed the girl. In the throes of despair she put up her finger and recited her predicament to the dog, with the faint hope that he *would* understand, for he was an intelligent animal, as the girls had learned in their many experiences with him on their journey. But he only blinked at her solemnly, without a gleam of comprehension in his brightly staring eyes. In sudden desperation she stamped her foot angrily, crying "Go home, Skipperee! Go home!" making a pretense of hurling a stone at him.

Skipperee, startled from his solemnity, shied away, stared a moment, and then, as she repeated this movement, he gave a yelp, darted over the strip of grass by the window, and a moment later disappeared from view.

"Oh, this place is like the City of the Dead!" thought the girl, as she hurried nervously up the stairs from the grim shadows of the rapidly darkening basement. And then, in the hope that another attempt to get out might be heard,— for O dear! Skipperee might get lost and not be found for hours,— she again kicked and pounded on the entrance-door. But it was a waste of time and strength, and she at length returned to the chair by the desk.

Oppressed by the desolate silence, she resolved to occupy the anxious moments by looking at a few relics

that, in her hurry to inspect things of more import, she had been compelled to pass by. Oh, she wished Peggy had not showed her those grewsome teeth. Ugh! they were ghostly reminders. No, she would not look at them!

She hurried into the room, only to feel a curious sense of isolation among these reminders of the dead, glancing with quickly averted eyes at the dulled and dingy-looking portraits on the wall.

She walked unsteadily to one of the glass cases near, and stared at it determinedly. But alas! it was too dark to see. Then her eyes brightened, as she gave a gleeful little laugh and plunged her hand into her capacious bag again. A moment later a small flash-light was reflecting its round, yellowish glare on the case. How lucky, she thought, that she had caught it up at the last second, thinking that possibly it might prove of some use in looking at some ancient curio.

The cheery glare from her "beacon" helped to lighten her oppression, and she was soon flashing it here and there, busy examining the many objects under the glass. Suddenly her eyes expanded, she flashed her light closer, and then her heart bounded, for on a card fastened to a high salt-cellar of antique design she read the name, "Margaret Doane."

"Doane!" she repeated the name slowly. "Why, that's the same name as the man's who gave the rudder — my name — I wonder —" She peered intently

and managed to decipher the fine small handwriting, "Loaned by Margaret Doane, Salem, Massachusetts."

Rona caught up the flash-light and hastened back to her chair, her mind busy with a strange problem, as her eyes stared unseeingly before her. "Margaret Doane,"— the name was cut sharply on her memory; but at that moment she recognized a familiar call of Peggy's and with a cry of joy she was at the door, crying excitedly, "Oh, girls, I am here! Open the door!"

"Oh, is it really you or your ghost?" demanded Peggy's excited treble. Then came Judith's voice anxiously worried as she called out: "Rona, *are* you all right? Oh, we have been frightened to death about you!"

"I'm all right," she answered with a hysterical giggle; "but I'm almost dead here alone in this gloomy old building."

"Oh, you poor darling!" now came Betty's comforting voice. Then Donald's, "Great Scott! how shall we get her out?" rose loud and clear above the clamorous hubbub of the girls' shrill voices, as they all frantically besought him to do something and get that door open.

But Donald was evidently equal to the emergency, for after a few hurried words there came the sound of rapidly retreating footsteps mingled with the pleading cries of, "Oh, hurry, Donald! Do be quick!"

And then Judith, with her mouth pressed against the door, was trying to cheer the prisoner by all sorts of comforting assurances, while Peggy flopped down on her knees, and, with her eyes glued against the keyhole,— to make sure that the ghosts of the dear departed did not scare her to death,— told how on their return they had found Skipperee racing up and down the veranda of the hotel, very much excited, with the card fastened to his collar.

The girls, with the intention of keeping Rona's flagging spirits above zero, sang rag-time songs, asked conundrums, and repeated funny sayings to a running accompaniment from Judith as to how they came to lose her. Rona tried to curb her impatience and be as cheery and merry as the girls, although at times she grew strangely silent, as the name " Margaret Doane " beat in a monotonous tattoo against her brain.

But at last there came a cheer from the girls, the sound of on-coming feet, of a key being pushed into the keyhole, and — the door swung open! A moment later Rona was hauled forth by a crowd of relieved, happy girls, each one trying to pat or kiss her at the same time. Young Wayne did his share in the general rejoicing by telling how he had routed the custodian from the supper-table and hustled him along as quickly as if at the point of a bayonet.

That much-flurried gentleman, with many apologies for making a prisoner of so charming a young lady,

explained that when he saw Miss Marston and the gentlemen pass out behind the crowd of girls as they returned from the lower hall, supposing they were all out, he had hurriedly locked the door and hastened to his home.

By this time, and from many mouths, Rona came to understand that after leaving the hall the girls had separated, some returning to the hotel to dress for dinner, others starting to hunt up post-cards, while Peggy and the Joy Girl, accompanied by young Wayne, had gone for a short walk down North Street. In this way Rona readily understood how it was that she was not missed until a few moments before finding the dog on the veranda.

Rona, glad of her freedom and that she had had the experience, for it was an adventure after all, gave a glowing account of her detention in the gloomy old room, and then accepted all apologies with sweet graciousness. Then, with eyes alight with a mysterious animation, she drew Judith to one side and told her about the finding of the name Margaret Doane.

"Isn't it strange that I should have found the two names on the same day?" she queried excitedly; "and to think the second name should tell where the person lived! Now perhaps I can get a clew to who I am. And oh, Judith, if those two people are descendants of the early settlers, that would mean — if I came from them —"

"It would mean," interrupted her companion composedly, "that you are a real America's Daughter. Did you say the lady lived in Salem?"

"Yes," nodded Rona eagerly; "on the card was written, 'Loaned by Margaret Doane, Salem, Massachusetts.'"

"Oh, Rona, we are going to Salem the last of this week; isn't that lovely!" cried Judith delightedly. "We can turn detectives and ferret out this Margaret Doane. Oh, I do hope we can find something that will bring happiness to you, honey girl, at last."

That night Rona stood by the window of her room looking up at the moon, round and golden, with a mellow radiance sweeping the waters of the bay with a silver fire, and then down at the Rock, standing forth from the grim shadows of the wharf with a strange distinctness. It was all so beautiful, so calm, that it stilled the ache in her heart and she was buoyed with new hope. "Oh, mother!" she cried. "Can it be true that I am really going to find you?" A moment later she tiptoed cautiously across the floor, so as not to awaken her sleeping mate, and then, with a contented little sigh, crawled into bed.

The next day was radiant with sunshine and blue sky, and so was Rona's heart, for her brain hummed hopefully to the tune of "Margaret Doane," when they set out for the four-mile ride by automobile to Kings-

ton. The ride was by way of the old Boston highroad, with luring little views of tree-shaded lanes, in the distance, and odd little streets dabbed at the end with patches of blue, the harbor.

But they were soon at what was once a part of Plymouth, but now an independent town, named in 1726, after George I, Kingston. A rambling walk through a lane, over a meadow to a highroad, and then, but a short distance from the railroad, and they had come to Elder Cushman's spring, nestling at the foot of a knoll beneath the shade of century-old trees.

"Was this Elder Cushman the Robert Cushman who, when the Pilgrims decided to emigrate to the New World, was sent with John Carver from Leyden to get a charter from King James?" asked Judith, turning towards the doctor.

"No, the elder was his son," returned that gentleman. "Robert Cushman, if you remember, when the *Speedwell* sprung aleak, returned to Leyden and did not sail for Plymouth until the following year, when he came over in the *Fortune*. He must have been a widower, for when he died, in 1625, his son Thomas became a member of the Bradford household, and later married Mary Allerton, who was one of the *Mayflower* children. In this way Thomas came into possession of the Allerton estate on which this spring is located. He was an elder in the church for forty years. His wife, Mary, lived to be ninety years of

age, being the last, it is claimed, of the *Mayflower* passengers to die. This part of Plymouth was named Rocky Nook, by the first comers,— Allerton, Bradford, Francis Cooke, Dr. Fuller, and others, who settled here when the settlement by the 'towne brooke' began to spread out."

A ride over a bridge spanning the river named after the captain of the *Mayflower,* and a walk up a bluff, brought the party to an old farmhouse shaded by aged trees on a grassy slope surrounded at its base by a low stone wall. But they did not linger long here when they found that it was only the home of Major John Bradford, the grandson of the governor.

A walk of a quarter of a mile, however, brought them to the original Bradford estate; but here, instead of an ancient house, to their disappointment, a tablet on a knoll set about with trees was the only assurance that they were treading on historic ground. Rona knelt and read:

"This eminence
is a portion of the ancient estate of
William Bradford,
The illustrious governor of Plymouth colony on which
He had a house before 1637.

Here his son the "Honorable Major"
William Bradford
Lived and died in 1704.
Wamsutta, the Indian chieftain, tarried here
just before his death, in 1662."

In answer to a question from one of the girls as to who Wamsutta was, Dr. Wayne said he was the son of Massasoit, the Pilgrims' great friend and sachem of the Wampanoag Indians. Unfortunately, after his father's death he was suspected of designs against the settlers and was taken prisoner and carried to Plymouth.

"It being proved, however," continued the doctor, "that there were no grounds for the rumor, he was released. But on going to visit at the governor's house he was talken ill and hurried to the Indian encampment. As he died soon after, it inflamed the Wampanoags against the settlers, and to this cause has been attributed King Philips's War."

Rona, who with her companions had gathered some clover blossoms from a grassy depression near, lingered a moment, as they turned to leave, and then, suddenly stooping, laid a few pink blossoms at the base of the old tablet.

As she turned away, seeing that Dr. Wayne and the Best Beloved were looking at her curiously, she colored slightly as she shyly said: "Oh, I just wanted to leave a little token in memory of the governor, who seems to have been a homey man as well as a great one. And because," she added regretfully, "although he was great, he isn't even in the Hall of Fame, and yet he was one of the founders of the nation."

"Yes, he was one of the men who gave us the prin-

ciples that have made this nation great," returned the doctor, in quick appreciation of the girl's offering; "a man of learning, of deep piety, just and humane, and with a toleration far ahead of the narrow-minded bigotry of many who were ranked as greater."

"It was so sad, too," ventured the gentle Betty, who had stepped to Rona's side and was holding her hand, "to think that his wife should be drowned while he was away."

"I have read somewhere," observed the Best Beloved with a smile at the girl's mournful little face, "that he was very fond of her and called her 'My May.'"

"But he married again," adjudged Judith, who had joined the group. "He sent to England for Alice Southworth, a widow."

"Yes," supplemented Dr. Wayne; "they had been sweethearts when young, and she must have loved him still, or else she wouldn't have undertaken such a perilous journey."

As they stood on Captain's Hill in Duxbury, before a lofty stone shaft surmounted by a statue of the military leader of the Pilgrims, the doctor said he was well named Myles, for it was a Roman name, meaning soldier. After a snap-shot of the little captain as he stood in conical-shaped hat, with his cape falling from his shoulders and his face turned seaward, pointing towards the harbor of Plymouth, they

hurried to the Standish cottage at the foot of the hill. It had been built by his son, Alexander, in 1666, as told in glaring letters on the big chimney, and was of interest to the girls as being as near as they could get to the hero of Longfellow's poem, for although he had never visited the house, timbers from the original homestead had been built into the walls. With reverent awe they slowly fingered the curious wooden latches, or bobbins, of the door, hanging to the latch-string, which had also come from the original Standish house.

As they stood in front of the fireplace, broad and long enough to contain a tree, Rona's imaginative mind pictured a colonial fireside scene, and to add to its interest while describing it to the girls she portrayed two lovers sitting under the open chimney on a settee, holding each other's hands.

"Ah, my dear young lady," interrupted the doctor at this thrilling moment, "in the early days lovers were not allowed to sit and hold each other's hands. In fact, all the love-making had to be done in the presence of the family; no nooks or corners allowed. And their sweet endearments were generally telephonic messages transmitted through a courting-stick, a hollow reed about an inch in diameter and six or eight feet long."

This was so unromantic an interruption to the fireside scene that it excited no little laughter, although

Peggy declared it would be a fine contrivance to keep an undesirable suitor at a distance.

"Gee!" exclaimed Donald with a twinkle in his brown eyes. "If a fellow had to make love to a pretty girl through a stick, or an ear-trumpet,"—for the doctor had said this courting-stick was fitted with a mouth- and ear-piece,—"I guess the girls would all be thornbacks."

"Thornbacks!" echoed a chorus of feminine voices. "Why, what do you mean?"

"Old maids, of course," replied Donald with some amusement, when he discovered that the girls did not know the word that was used in the early days to designate that much-despised person.

"O dear!" lamented Poco; "I thought 'left over,' or 'back number' was bad enough, but a thornback! Well, I hope I shall never be one," with a long-drawn sigh.

"My dear Poco," chimed in the Best Beloved, "there are a great many things that are more objectionable than being a woman without a mate. But to be called an 'unclaimed blessing,' as we are sometimes, sounds as if you were worth the asking, even if you had never accepted."

"But you will never be an unclaimed blessing," declared the doctor so quickly and emphatically that Miss Marston's pretty pink cheeks flamed red, while the girls stared curiously.

As they trailed out of the old house one or two whispered mysteriously that they knew *something* was going to happen soon. But Judith's admonition not to be silly gossips acted as a damper to their prognostications, and the incident was forgotten.

A few moments later they were standing with reverent stillness before the resting-place of the Pilgrim captain, which looked more like a fortress than a grave, with a huge bowlder surrounded by walls of heaped stones and mounted with four cannon, and piles of cannon-balls on the rocks between.

The doctor said that the original resting-place of Myles Standish had been marked by two triangular pyramidal stones, but that the old burying-ground, unfenced and neglected for many years, had become a pasture for cows, so that these stones had become buried in the earth and the site of his grave lost. Later, however, they were found and identified by the fact that a skeleton of a young woman with light brown hair was discovered near. Some years after this discovery another skeleton of a woman with beautiful teeth was found near the grave, which seemed to have established that the group of stones marked the captain's grave, not only from the fact that the skeleton supposed to be his was that of a powerfully built man, but that in his will he had said that he desired to be buried between his daughter, Lorea, and his daughter-

in-law, Mary. The doctor then indicated two smaller stones, the graves of these two young women,— Lorea, of sampler fame, and Mary, Myles's son's wife, of whom he was very fond.

Under the shadow of some odorous pines and cedars an Alden grave was found, but as there was nothing to indicate that it was the resting-place of John and Priscilla, the girls were greatly disappointed. A few steps down a stone path, however, they saw the supposed grave of Elder Brewster. With a reverent salute they hurried away to the site of Eagle Nest, the name given by the worthy Elder to his farm near a number of cottonwood trees. Another short drive and they were looking at a farmhouse said to be almost two hundred and fifty years old, built by a grandson of the famed lovers, John and Priscilla; but as it was not the place where *they lived,* the girls' interest was slight. It was not long before they had started for home, singing merrily as the car speeded over the historic old roads, passing any number of colonial sites; but the best of all, Peggy declared, were the beautiful views of landscape and harbor.

On arriving at the hotel the girls were made exuberantly happy by a package of mail, and they soon scurried into recesses and corners to read the news from home in undisturbed peace.

As Judith sat smilingly happy,— she had just re-

ceived a letter from her mother,— Rona came rushing up, her brown eyes dancing with golden lights as she cried joyously: "Oh, Judith! I have just received a letter from Mr. Hillis — old Sore-Bones, as you call him. Oh, but he is just the dearest thing! For, Judith," shrilled the girl, "he has told me such glad, glad news that I am almost too happy to tell you!"

CHAPTER XII

THE CANDLE-LIGHT SERVICE

"OH, Rona," exclaimed Judith, with shining, expectant eyes, "have you heard from your father or mother?"

"Oh, no," answered the girl, her eyes saddening quickly; "it is not so good news as *that*. It is about Isadore and her — mother."

"Oh, tell me quickly," cried Judith, keyed to intense interest as she pulled Rona down on the settee by her side. "I am just wild to know what it can be."

"Well, do you remember my telling you," began Rona tentatively, "about Mr. Hillis making me read that Round-Robin letter that you girls sent me?"

Judith nodded impatiently.

"Well, you know he was greatly interested, not only in the Joy Girl's going with us, but in Isadore's story. At the time he didn't make any comment, but shortly after he told me that he had met a gentleman who was connected with the Belgian Relief Fund. He was to sail for the other side the very next day. And what do you think?" exclaimed Rona animatedly.

"Old Sore-Bones, as *you* call him, Jude, just up and told the gentleman all about Isadore, and, what is more, he told him if at any time he should hear anything about any one losing a daughter to cable him.

"As time passed on and nothing came of it," continued Rona, "I began to think it would never amount to anything, for you know there are so many of those poor refugees wandering about, looking for some one they have lost. But the strangest thing has happened!" she cried, clasping her hands tragically. "I have a letter from Mr. Hillis, and he says that he has just received word from the Relief gentleman that he thinks he has found Isadore's mother! She was working in the hospital at Aire in France, and she told him she had lost a daughter in a church — that her husband was an officer in the Belgian army — and —"

"Oh, Rona!" almost screamed Judith; "do let's go and find Isadore. Do not let her wait a minute. But let me see the letter; there may be a mistake."

"Oh, Rona, of course it's Madame Briedel. Don't you see she says she left her daughter *alone* in a church at Mont des Cats; that is the same place that Isadore spoke of." The next moment she had caught Rona's hand in hers, and was sweeping her down the hall to the office where Isadore, with dark, mournful eyes, sat knitting on her long gray stocking.

It was all over in a few moments,— the sudden rush up to the refugee, the asking of a few hurried

questions by the excited girls, the telling by Rona of what she had told Mr. Hillis, and then the reading of the letter, which not only told the news that Judith had read so quickly, but gave the information that the Relief gentleman, as Rona had dubbed him in her excitement, had already placed this lady on a steamer bound for New York, and they would hear — the letter was dated the last of June — in a few days of her arrival.

There had been a quick dilation of Isadore's dark eyes when the girls had first begun to tell their news, then a sudden fire had leaped into their pool-like depths, and as Rona finished, the girl was on her feet, tearing at the letter like some mad thing. A hurried glance down its pages and then she had fallen back, white and faint, with the two girls fanning her excitedly, while Peggy, who had just come up, had made a wild rush for a glass of water.

But her collapse did not last long, for before the girls could call the doctor or Miss Marston, she had suddenly sat up and was crying hysterically, "Oh, I must go to New York! Oh, I must go to New York!" On being told, however, that she was to await word from Mr. Hillis, she broke into alternate cries of gladness and sobs, to the consternation of the Best Beloved, who had arrived on the scene, and who feared the hotel guests sitting in the office would think the girl was demented. But shortly after, on learning her

story, the girl not only won their interest and sympathy, but she received cards of congratulation and several bouquets, as well as many other expressions of their good wishes for a speedy reunion with her mother.

And that Isadore appreciated their kindness and sympathy was attested by the happy light in her eyes and her joyful smile, as, in her pretty, pleasing English, she tried to make them understand her feelings towards them.

"Why, she looks like another girl!" exclaimed Peggy. "Phew, who would have thought she was such a beauty?"

And this was true, for nothing is more conducive to good looks than happiness, and happiness was beginning to push aside the deadening sorrow that had shrouded the girl like a cloud. Her sometime nickname of the Wailing Princess was dropped, although she was still called the Princess, in deference to the something about her that bespoke the culture that comes from good breeding and the refinement of high birth. As the girls saw her brave endeavors not to weep, but to be cheerful and appreciative of their interest and care for her, she had come to be one of them, sharing their joys and disappointments and the many little incidents of the journey. And as for the story of the Pilgrims, or the "hero martyrs," as she called them, she had entered with such zest into the

history of their lives that Judith declared that she was in a fair way of making as good an American as any of them.

But perhaps there was no one to whom she showed more affection than her first friend, America's Daughter, as she loved to call the girl. Rona did not know why she was the first one sought in either joy or sorrow, but with conscientious loyalty she tried, by her ready sympathy and consoling words, to help the bereft Daughter of Belgium to forget her great grief, hoping that time would work a cure, in case she should never see her mother again. But now it was all right, and Rona was almost as happy as Isadore herself.

Isadore had just bidden Rona good-night; she had kissed her again and again with great warmth, assuring her that she would love her from her heart — always.

And then the girls all came trooping in, Peggy, looking like a princess herself, in her white, lacy negligée with its blue ribbons, and her gold hair twisted up on her head like a golden crown. Poco, in her flowered kimono with its red sash, looked like a geisha girl; Judith, like a dream in pink, while Mae, in her simple blue gown, was really what she was always trying to be — beautiful. But Betty in her plain white robe was just a dear, Rona declared, as she kissed her warmly, for she reminded her of some gentle priestess of purity.

They had come to hold their twenty-minute club meeting,— short readings under the supervision of the Best Beloved and Judith,— which informed the girls on many facts, antiquated, perhaps, to adults, but to these beginners in life's story it had made the personages of whom they were learning, and the places they were visiting, twice as interesting.

Rona gave a little sigh of relief when the reading was over. It had been on the Puritans, as the girls wanted to know about these new people whose footsteps they were to follow in a few days. The girl was glad that her guests soon trailed off to bed, for they all grew sleepy early, after sight-seeing.

Betty, who had lingered for an extra good-night kiss,— she was an affectionate little thing,— as she glanced at her friend's face, cried, "Oh, Rona, aren't you well? You look awfully tired."

"Why, yes, Betty,"— Rona's eyes filled with tears at the note of sympathy in the earnest young voice,— "but you know I get blue sometimes, that is," she added apologetically, "when I get thinking about tracing my parents. It seems such a useless thing to do, for really I haven't a tangible clew to work on." The girl's eyes shadowed wearily.

"Yes, I know," replied Betty. "But don't get discouraged, for even if the lady in Salem, that you spoke of, can't tell you anything, she may know some one who can. And then I'm sure it will be all right."

Betty impulsively threw her arms around her friend's neck, and, as she laid her lips against her pink ear, whispered very low: "Oh, Rona, I pray every night when I go to bed that God will let you find your mother. And I know my prayers will be answered in some way," added the gentle voice positively.

"Oh, you dear little comforter," answered Rona, returning Betty's soft kiss warmly. "Yes, I know they will be answered, for even if they don't give me my parents, perhaps they will help me to be good." And then Betty had gone and Rona had turned to undress for bed.

But at that moment Judith entered the room, crying, "Oh, Rona, I have the strangest thing to tell you! Do you remember the lady and gentleman who sat at our table in the dining-room to-night? The lady with such a sweet face? She had light hair and wore a brown traveling dress."

Rona nodded silently, and then her eyes brightened as if with the thought of something suddenly recalled.

"Well, all through dinner I was wondering whom that lady put me in mind of. And then, as I was going to my room just now, after leaving the girls, it came to me like a flash. Why, Rona, she looks like you! Didn't you notice it, Peg?" she asked, turning to that young lady. But Peggy, who had tumbled into bed, cried, "Oh, don't bother me to remember anything; I'm too sleepy."

"Well, I'm sure she looked like you, Rona," continued Judith, "for she had a mouth like yours, with the little dimple when she smiled, only your dimple is on the left side and hers was on the right. Odd, wasn't it?" inquired Judith, patting her friend's face kindly.

"Why, yes, in a way, because, do you know, Judith," answered Rona with wondering eyes, "all during dinner I was wishing — I know I was silly — that I could have a mother who looked like her, for oh, she had such a dear face! It has made me blue to think about it — ever since." The girl turned her head away.

"Oh, you poor, motherless kid!" cried Judith sympathetically. "Well, never mind, honey girl; just keep up your grit, and who knows what will come to pass?" And then Judith hurried off to bed.

In accord with their plans to visit the Silent Hill,— as the hillside where the Pilgrims were at rest was called by the girls,— the next morning after breakfast they set out, in a somewhat merry mood, considering their destination. But their merry chatter simmered into silence when they found themselves on the summit facing the harbor, with its winding pathways bordered with grass and patches of shrubbery, so closely connected with those who rested beneath the shade of the trees.

They first viewed the Bradford monument with its inscription that he "was a zealous Puritan and sincere

Christian," and then the grave of his second wife, Alice, the young widow who had crossed the seas at her lover's call. Then came the John Howland tomb. He was the young man, Judith reminded them, who had fallen overboard while the *Mayflower* was crossing the ocean, but who had deftly caught hold of a trailing halyard and been drawn back to the ship.

Next they came to the monument of Thomas Cushman, the owner of the little spring in Kingston, and that of his wife, Mary; also the original stone marking the grave of the mate of the *Mayflower*, Mr. Thomas Clark. And then came that of Elder Faunce, to whom America is indebted for the history and preservation of Plymouth Rock.

But youth is so prone to joyousness that overmuch solemnity palls, and so Peggy and Poco were soon heard giggling as they read that Miss Hannah Howland had died of a "languishment." But their giggles ceased when the doctor pointed to a monument near, erected to seventy-two seamen, who perished in Plymouth harbor in 1778, and stated that one of them had been the lover of the lady who had died of the "languishment."

This statement appealed to the girls' love of the romantic, and ready sympathy was voiced for the unfortunate damsel. But a few moments later the following epitaph, written by a Mrs. Tabitha Plasket,—who had not only indited her husband's, but her own

as well,— aroused their sense of humor as Poco intoned:

"'All you that doth behold my stone
Consider how soon I was gone.
Death does not always warning give,
Therefore be careful how you live.
Repent in time, no time delay,
I in my prime was called away.'"

Next they read the one written by the lady on herself:

"'Adieu, vain world. I have seen enough of thee
And I am careless what thou sayest of me.
Thy smiles I wish not;
Nor thy frowns I fear,
I am now at rest, my head lies quiet here.'"

When Poco finished they came to the conclusion that although the defunct widow was not much of a poet, she certainly must have been decidedly eccentric.

As they sauntered through this "garden of rest," reading the inscriptions and gleaning a fact here and there about the people they had been so interested in, the Wiseacre, as Dr. Wayne had now come to be called in the secret conclaves of the club, said that although the early settlers were so austere and devout in their daily lives, the funerals of their dead were very simple affairs, as no services were held either at home or the grave.

"The mourners simply followed the deceased to the burial place with reverent dignity and a solemn

silence, that was not broken by the reading of scripture. No," continued the gentleman, "not even a hymn or a song was sung; in fact, not even a word from pastor or friend broke the impressive silence as the earth claimed its own.

"But after the burial this sacred reverence ended, and we hear of lengthy funeral sermons, or of elegies in the form of verses, or eulogistic remarks, often printed in the newspapers."

The "curfew" had just clanged out the hour of nine that evening,— for Plymouth still adhered to its old-time custom of telling the people the time to go to bed,— when the door of the hotel opened and the figure of a young girl came forth. In her white gown, holding aloft a dimly burning candle, as she walked with slow and deliberate step, one might have been tempted to think she was one of the Pilgrims returning from her grave on the hill, if another figure, with the same precision of step and purity of garb, had not followed closely in the rear. Then came another, and still another of these white-robed maidens, each with a flickering light, until a line of white-moving figures, with heads and arms rigidly erect, and with measured step, in stately precision, had passed down the steps of the hotel to the walk.

As the few guests who were seated on the veranda saw these weirdly-moving white figures, they were on their feet, with intent eyes, eager to see what was

going to happen. Possibly a few had heard a word dropped here and there, and knew that it was a candle-light service in memory of the women of the *Mayflower,* and of those who were buried on Cole's Hill.

Step by step, with swinging and graceful motion, the cavalcade of candle-bearers passed to the top of the hill, when, as if by some magic enchantment, those on the veranda saw that they had suddenly fallen into position and were marching in the form of a cross, holding their tiny torches stiffly in the breeze.

Down the slope of North Street, around the sacred shrine, came the glimmer of gown and candle, moving with the solemn stillness of vestal priestesses in the performance of some mystic and ancient rite. On they glided along Water Street, silhouetted with the snowy whiteness of marble against the dark and gloomy shadows of the old warehouses.

Now they were climbing up Leyden Street, slowly passing by the site of the Common House, and then they had turned and were again facing the hotel on the summit of the hill, each arm stiff and upright with its light brightly glowing. Next, with a sudden halt, they were standing under the trees whose softly moving boughs threw strange and fanciful patterns in the moonlight across the solitary weather-aged tablet which told of the sleeping ones within the hill.

For a moment all was reverently still, and then the soft strains of a mandolin stirred the night breezes, as the girls, in white vestments, in cross-like formation, slowly and solemnly chanted the Lord's Prayer. As the last note merged into the gentle rustle of the leaves above, a small figure standing on the old tablet — it was Betty — raised her glimmering taper, and in a low but clear tone repeated:

"I burn this candle in memory of Dorothy May, wife of William Bradford, the second governor of Plymouth. She suffered sorrow and grief on sailing to the New World, for she had left behind in Leyden her only child. Her end was untimely, for while her husband was away on an exploring expedition, she fell overboard and was drowned, as the *Mayflower* lay anchored in Cape Cod Bay."

Then another girlish voice was heard. It trembled slightly, but the candle light never wavered as it told: "I burn this candle in memory of Rose Standish, who came from the Isle of Man and was known as the 'English Rose.' An entry in Governor Bradford's diary reads, 'Jan. 28, dies Rose, the wife of Captain Standish,' telling us that she was the first of the *Mayflower* women to succumb to the fatal sickness that came to the Pilgrims their first winter in New England, and to be buried on Cole's Hill. Her memory is endeared to us by a small fragment of a blue silk quilt

strewn with apple-blossoms, a reminder of the sweet life that bloomed only to fade like those fragrant blossoms of May."

Another fair hand was upheld, and softly came the low-spoken remembrance: "I burn this candle in memory of Katherine Carver, the gentle and lovely lady known as the wife of the first governor of Plymouth. Bowing to the will of Almighty God,— who had led His little flock as they endured so many hardships for conscience' sake,— she died of a sorrow-stricken heart six weeks after the passing-away of her husband, John Carver."

"I burn this candle in memory of Elizabeth Winslow,"— the voice was Margery's,—"who, as Elizabeth Barker, while a member of the Pilgrim community at Leyden, had married that cultured gentleman, Edward Winslow. Her married life was short, for, alas! she was one of those martyred ones who succumbed to the fatal sickness, and was laid to rest on Cole's Hill."

"I burn this candle in memory of Mary Brewster," — some one of the spectators whispered that the speaker was the dark-eyed girl with the winsome smile,—"the wife of the ruling elder of Plymouth. She was a devoted wife, and a loyal mother to her four boys and two girls. A gentle, womanly woman, who was called the mother of the flock, although she was but a little over forty years of age, but said to



"I BURN THIS CANDLE IN MEMORY OF DOROTHY MAY, WIFE OF WILLIAM BRADFORD, THE SECOND GOVERNOR OF PLYMOUTH."—*Page 203.*



have been the oldest woman of the *Mayflower* company."

"I burn this candle to commemorate Susannah Chilton,"— Poco's voice rang out strong and clear,— "who came from Leyden on the ship *Mayflower,* but who was called to her rest during the hardships of the first winter; and in memory of her daughter, Mary, who, tradition tells us, was the first woman of the *Mayflower* passengers to step on Forefathers' Rock. She married John Winslow, and lived and died in Boston."

Another candle flickered to a higher flame, and the voice of a brown-eyed girl was heard in gentle-spoken words: "I burn this candle to bring to remembrance Susannah White, wife of William White. She was the mother of Peregrine White, the first white child born in New England. She also had the honor to be the first bride of the Pilgrim town, marrying, on the death of her husband, Edward Winslow; and, in later years, had the distinction of being the first lady of the colony, as the wife of the honored governor of Plymouth Plantation."

"I burn this candle in memory of Alice Mullins,"— Mae was somewhat frightened and spoke rapidly,— "wife of William Mullins, both of Pastor Robinson's flock at Leyden. Alas! she passed to her rest the first winter. And I burn this candle also in memory of Priscilla, her daughter,"— she was speaking

more slowly,—"known as 'Priscilla, the Mayflower of Plymouth,' and who married John Alden, to become the mother of a numerous posterity."

"I burn this candle in memory of Helen, wife of John Billington." "Ah," some one was heard to whisper, "that is the Belgian girl speaking; I can tell by her quaint English." Yes, it was Isadore, who, because none of the girls wanted to honor Helen, the so-called double-tongued woman of the colony, from gentle pity had chosen her name. "She was the mother of two sturdy boys," she continued slowly, "and of her we shall say nothing but good, for she has gone to the eternal abiding Home, where all faults are forgotten in the forgiveness of Christ, our Saviour."

"I burn this candle to commemorate the following women who, for the cause of liberty, gave their lives," said Peggy, speaking with tragic emphasis: "Elizabeth Hopkins, the mother of the babe who was born at sea, Oceanus Hopkins, and wife of Stephen Hopkins; also in memory of Ann, wife of Edward Tilley; Bridget, wife of his brother John; Sarah, wife of Francis Eaton; Alice, wife of John Rigdale; Mrs. Martin, wife of Christopher; Mrs. Tinker, wife of Thomas Tinker; and Ann, wife of Edward Fuller, who, by the providence of God, were called to their rest during the fatal sickness of the first winter."

Then the Joy Girl, her voice vibrating with happi-

ness as she gave each name, said: "I burn this candle in memory of the little girls who came over in the Pilgrim ship: Little Humility Cooper, who was mothered by Mrs. Ann Tilley, for she had no children of her own to mother; Elizabeth Hopkins, aged thirteen, who, when grown, married John Howland; Desire Minter, who was tended and cared for by the lovely Katherine Carver, as she was an orphan, and Mrs. Carver had no little ones." The Joy Girl had evidently forgotten the wording of her speech, and so in her own original way was telling what she had learned. "Ellen More, she was an orphan, too, but she died of the sickness. And Mary Allerton,— she was the little girl who married Elder Cushman and lived to be so terribly old; and Constance Hopkins, and others." The Joy Girl trembled nervously, as she realized that she had been making up as she went along, and so came to an abrupt end.

Then came the voice of the Best Beloved, calm and well-modulated, just as if she didn't know what it was to be frightened. "I burn this candle in memory of Mary Allerton, wife of Isaac Allerton, and mother of his three children, who passed to her eternal rest the first lonely winter spent by the Pilgrims on the New England shore; and in memory and appreciation of all those brave and heroic women founders of this nation, who sailed the wide deep to help their good men build an altar to the God they desired to serve and

worship, according to the sincere devotion of their humble lives. Peace be to them. Also hallowed be the memory of those who lie on Burial Hill, those who are at rest on this little slope, and those who have been interred under the canopy of the Rock."

And then came Poco's voice, as, with reverent solemnity, she softly repeated,

"'The Pilgrim Fathers are at rest:[1]
When summer's throned on high,
And the world's warm breast is in verdure drest,
Go, stand on the hill where they lie.
The earliest ray of the golden day
On that hallowed spot is cast;
And the evening sun, as he leaves the world,
Looks kindly on that spot last.

The Pilgrim spirit has not fled:
It walks in noon's broad light;
And it watches the bed of the glorious dead,
With the holy stars by night.
It watches the bed of the brave who have bled,
And shall guard this ice-bound shore,
Till the waves of the bay, where the *Mayflower* lay,
Shall foam and freeze no more.'"

There was a silent moment,— the girls were preparing to sing their closing hymn,— when a tall figure shrouded in flowing white garments strode hastily from behind a tree, and placed itself in the rear of the candle-bearers, standing in the formation of a cross under the trees. The next instant something dark leaped through the air, and then a sudden streak

[1] "The Pilgrim Fathers," by John Pierpont.

of light flashed its red shadow athwart the girls' faces.

Rona, standing next to Peggy, who had insisted upon being the last one of the line, blinked in startled amazement as the sudden light blazoned into her eyes. "Oh, what is it?" she cried in a tense whisper to Peggy. But that young lady, in a remarkably matter-of-fact tone, answered hastily, "Oh, you goosie, keep still!"

CHAPTER XIII

THE CAMP IN THE WOODS

RONA, quickly perceiving that there was a conspiracy afoot, silently obeyed her. A moment later, as the glimmering from an automobile light quivered through the shadows, a voice strong with the invigorating fire of youth rang out:

"I burn this light in memory of those brave men who forsook their homes, the comforts of life, and their native land, to lay the corner-stone of a nation, not ruled by king or bishop, but, through their simple faith in God, by the divine heritage of liberty. Peace be to their ashes, and God's blessing upon their descendants, who, inspired to show the world that the American spirit — the desire to do right and trust in God — is not dead, are ready and willing to live or die for the righteous cause of humanity and civilization!"

The stilled hush that followed the words was brief, and then the spectators gathered on the hill burst forth into loud applause. Even the girls joined in the demonstration, although at first, when the voice rang out in clarion note, they were all quivering with angry indignation that Donald should spoil the sweet rever-

ence of their service, for of course his boyish voice was immediately recognized.

Judith, in a white heat, was ready to fling herself about and hustle him away, when she was arrested, not only by the solemnity of his manner, but by the simple directness of the words that followed. And the girls, seeing her remain perfectly quiet, and supposing that she knew all about this unexpected number on their program, remained reverently still.

"Oh, Donald, how did you come to think of it?" was Judith's greeting, as a moment later the girls surrounded this enterprising young man.

"Oh, Peggy was at the bottom of it, I'll warrant you," was Mae's declaration, as she faced about and confronted that young lady, whose eyes were gleaming merrily in approval of Donald's performance.

"No, Peggy was not at the bottom of it," she sharply protested. "It was Donald's and the Doctor's doings," pointing to the latter gentleman, who, at this moment, with Miss Marston, joined the group. "I only guessed what was coming, and kept still, just for the fun of it."

"Well, that was something hard for you to do, Peg, I imagine," remarked Mae sarcastically, "for I never knew you to keep a secret before."

Peggy was about to flash back at Mae's unkind remark, but a pinch from Rona restrained her, and then they turned and were receiving the congratula-

tions of the hotel people for having given such a worthy and effective memorial to those whom every one should honor and revere.

And so the celebration that the girls had worked so hard to make a success was over, and they were all laughing in merry banter with Donald, who protested — as he tried to keep his feet from tangling up in the sheet — that he was not minded to have all the honor given to the ladies of the *Mayflower*.

The next morning was given to the "left-overs,"— the places that so far they had not had time to visit, as a drive to Careswell, the site of Edward Winslow's home in Marshfield, and a view of the Forefathers' Monument, with its mammoth figure of Faith, on an eminence on the outskirts of the town.

The Howland and Harloe houses,— the latter built in 1677 from timbers of the old fort,— Colony Park, and the Billington Sea in Forest Park all came in for a share of attention. Billington Sea, the doctor explained, was named after John Billington, who, one day when climbing a tree shortly after the landing of the voyagers, declared he had discovered a sea. The girls were surprised when discussing the death of this man,— he had been executed for having killed a man in a fit of anger,— to find that he and his wife were not really Pilgrims, but had managed somehow to thrust themselves upon the Pilgrims at Southampton.

When the boat for Boston left Plymouth that after-

noon the American Footsteppers, and also Dr. Wayne and Donald, who had joined their party, were among its passengers. From a little side-deck, as the steamer glided down the bay, the girls looked silently back, and then a hand went up. It was Rona's. The next moment the girls were reverently making the patriotic salute to the little town set on a hill, with its places and memories sacred to the men and women whose determination to do right and trust in God had wrought an everlasting memorial to the highest and noblest attributes in man.

Some time later, as the steamer was pushing her way up to one of the mile or more of wharves that line the water-front of Boston, the Pilgrim sires were forgotten. The girls stood looking with eager eyes at the hilly city, bordered with its queer-shaped peninsulas and little inlets, as it slowly emerged from the haze and smoke that covered it like a film.

As the girls journeyed through the city Rona's eyes were caught by the sun sparkling on the Charles River, spanned by its beautiful bridges, and the sheen of the green-ribboned avenues crossed by odd little streets, from where church-spires rose from moldy graveyards, and, atop historic edifices told of memories teeming with the long-ago times. The girl drew a deep breath and tried to picture the little Puritan settlement of almost three hundred years ago, but the Public Gardens and parks, gleaming between snakelike twists of the

Elevated, made a blur with smoke-begrimed buildings that told of modern Boston, the London of the New World.

Poco, her velvety eyes on the hill, where the State House loomed with its golden dome like some fabled palace of fairy days, in sudden remembrance softly repeated:

> "'St. Botolph's Town! Far over leagues of land[1]
> And leagues of sea looks forth its noble tower,
> And far around the chiming bells are heard.
> So may that sacred name forever stand
> A landmark and a symbol of the power
> That lies concentred in a single word.'"

"St. Botolph's," repeated one of the group. "What a queer name, but I presume it is classy for Boston."

Miss Marston laughed as she replied, "Yes, with due reverence for the land of their birth the Puritans named this town by the sea after the quaint old city of Boston on one of the rushing spring-tide rivers of Lincolnshire. It was noted for its venerable church of St. Botolph's, with its giant tower reaching upward over three hundred feet."

"It is an odd name," remarked Rona. "It sounds something like Boat-help."

"That's just what it means," answered Judith quickly. "It was named in honor of a Saxon monk of the seventh century, who was supposed to have

[1] "Boston," H. W. Longfellow.

founded the town on the Witham River. He received the name of Bot-help, or Boat-help, because he befriended the mariners by erecting a high tower that held not only a great lantern but a chiming bell, so as to guide the bestormed sailors into port."

The girls' stay in Boston was brief, for the next morning they all gathered on the Central wharf, where they took the Gloucester boat for Cape Ann, with the avowed purpose of trailing the Puritans in the same way that they had commemorated the footsteps of the Pilgrims.

As they steamed past the harbor islands into the bay, the doctor, or Wiseacre, as Peggy would insist upon calling him, proved a most valuable acquisition to the party, as he pointed out Revere Beach on their left, known as the New American Brighton, and then the promontory of Nahant, with its Egg Rock lights to the fore.

They saw in the distance the beach of Lynn, the town of shoe fame, where tradition tells of a shoemaker who, with old-time gallantry, presented each one of its fair maids with a pair of shoes to match her satin ones, on her wedding day. Then they sailed by Swampscott; rugged Marblehead, flanked by its islands, with its lighthouse tower on the Neck; Salem, of witchcraft fame; and beautiful Beverly, guarded by Baker's Island and the Miseries.

But they were soon in the island-studded harbor of

Gloucester, "where twenty ships may easily ride therein," and a moment later had docked at the wharf. But Rona's eyes were on the rock-girt shore, with its strips of shining sand, and its jagged reefs and gray bowlders, where sea-gulls circled in white-winged flight.

Here and there a lone fisherman's hut, embowered in trailing vine and aflame with the heyday of gay-flaunting posies, stood boldly forth. The ladder paths stretching from crag to crag were plainly seen high above the snow-capped wave that dashed its line of white in scurrying masses over the beach and rocks.

Now they were held by the long flakes of codfish and mackerel bleaching in the sun, backed by a huddle of gray cottages, queer shops, and narrow lanes, their grim ugliness softened by the sea-folk's love of flower-bloom, and the green of the woods beyond. Here red-chimneyed cottages nestled with picturesque content,— tucked in among more pretentious summer homes,— and intersected by bewildering twists of winding paths that led to lily pond or skirted bough-hung orchard or glistening beach. A strong whiff of the pungent odor of cod and herring mingled with the salt from the sea, and then Rona realized that she was in the quaintest and greatest fishing mart in the United States.

After a shore dinner at a hotel near, the party walked to Stage Head, to see, on a bluff, the disman-

tled Fort Conant. The doctor, seeing that the girls were somewhat puzzled as to what the Puritans had had to do with the fort, explained that the two Pilgrims, Winslow and Cushman, in 1624, after obtaining a grant from the Sheffield Company of England, attempted a plantation here, and built a "greate house," a fishing stage. But as the "greate house" burned down, the salt works proved a failure, and from other causes the settlement did not prosper, the plan was abandoned.

But as Cape Ann had become well known for its abundance of fish and its beautiful harbor, it was not long before the Reverend John White, who seems to have been a philanthropist, attempted a settlement, after sending over farming implements and live-stock. One Roger Conant, a Church of England man, who at one time had lived with the Pilgrims at Plymouth, was made its governor.

"Six months later, however," continued the narrator, "notwithstanding Conant's able management, the colony was abandoned, thus causing the settlers to lose their patent, and many of them returned to England. Conant, however, with those who had determined to wait for another patent, moved to a 'fruitful neck of land' known by the Indian name of Naumkeag, but afterwards changed to Salem, a Hebrew word meaning 'peace.'

"In 1628, Captain John Endicott, a stern-browed

Puritan, arrived in the *Abigail* from England with the desired patent for the settlers, which had been purchased from the London Company Council and confirmed by the crown under the auspices of the Massachusetts Company.

"This new patent deposed Conant and made Endicott governor. Although there seems to have been some hard feeling on the part of the old planters that Endicott should reap what he had not sown, Conant, with his usual level-headedness, retired from the leadership, although he always remained one of the most influential men in the colony, he and the other planters being called the sentinels of Puritanism on the bay of Massachusetts. The Cape Ann station did not remain long abandoned, for new settlements sprang up in time, and in 1639 it was incorporated as a fishing station, and in 1642 as a town, named after Gloucester, in England.

"Now we have come to a new trail in our story," said the doctor, "as in 1629 the Massachusetts Company sent over the Reverend Francis Higginson, a Puritan, who had given up his benefice on account of persecution, and who had been supporting himself by preparing young men for college. Higginson, with his little fleet of five vessels, the *Talbot,* the *George,* the *Mayflower,* the *Four Sisters,* and the *Lion's Whelp,* arrived in Jŭne, dropping anchor one Saturday morning in Manchester Bay. Here a few of his

men landed and gathered strawberries, gooseberries, and 'sweet single roses,' which —"

"'Wild roses of Cape Ann. A rose is sweet,
No matter where it grows; and roses grow,
Nursed by the pure heavens, and the strengthening earth,
Wherever men will let them. Every waste
And solitary place is glad for them,
Since the old prophet sang so, until now.
But our wild roses, flavored with the sea,
And colored by the salt winds and much sun
To healthiest intensity of bloom,—
We think the world has none so beautiful.'"

"Oh, Lucy Larcom's 'Wild Roses of Cape Ann!'" exclaimed the doctor, turning with glowing eyes towards his interrupter, Miss Marston. "I was thinking of that poem while I was speaking, but unfortunately my memory is not poetically inclined, evidently, for poetry always escapes me."

"Perhaps because you think it is too trivial to remember," ventured the saucy Peggy, glancing up archly at the gentleman, who smiled down at the yellow-haired maiden as if he thought she was a rose herself. Then he cried, looking at the Best Beloved, "But can't you give us the rest of the poem, Miss Marston?"

"All I can remember," returned that lady smilingly, and then she repeated:

"'Even from his serious height, the Puritan
Stooped to their fragrance, and recorded them
"Sweete single roses," maidens of the woods.'"—

"The loveliest for their virgin loveliness," emphasized the doctor with a flash of his eyes in the direction of the speaker, whose cheeks, under his eloquent glance, flushed to the pink of the flower she had been telling about.

"Ah, I interrupted you," continued that gentleman. "Please continue."

But Miss Marston shook her head. "No," she declared, "I have repeated all I know, and then, too, I interrupted your discourse."

"You may well call it a discourse," laughed the doctor, "for my information has certainly taken that form; but I am interested in helping these fair 'Daughters of America' in their thirst for knowledge. Ah, which one is it that is 'America's Daughter'?" His keen eyes scanned the girlish faces upturned to his, until they alighted on Rona, who, with deepening color, looked seaward, inwardly wondering who could have told him about that name. As she stood in her natty blue suit, its blouse, with a sailor collar, trimmed with rows of white braid, and her jaunty white cap, her eyes afire with dancing gleams, and the light breezes blowing her hair into soft, curling tendrils across her ruddy cheeks, she was a pleasing life edition of a feminine "middy."

"Yes," resumed Dr. Wayne; "the *Talbot* lay in the harbor over Sunday, holding church services, it is claimed. On Monday morning the ships sailed up to

Salem, where they were eagerly welcomed by Endicott and the rest of the settlers."

The girls, having become interested in this story of the first settlement at Cape Ann, were much pleased when the doctor conducted them to a little cove back from the sea, which, he explained, was the tract of land called "The Fishermen's Field," as it established the site of the Puritans' attempted colonization.

After a peep at old Gloucester, and watching the many different processes of preparing "boned codfish," and a stroll into the residential part of the town, they hurried to the station. Here Margery, Rona, and Judith, climbed into an old ramshackle conveyance, and, with the rest of the party leading the way, were soon on their way to Salem by way of the high-road, which is said to follow the path through the woods over which Conant and the "Old Planters" had driven their cattle to Salem.

Picturesque coves, beaches of gleaming sand, cool, green dells, mossy bowlders, and stray glimpses of summer homes perched on the bluffs, passed each other in rapid succession. It was such a bewildering tangle of beauty set in green and dabbed with patches of blue, that it was some time before the girls realized that their companion vehicles had long since passed out of sight.

On Rona's admonition to the driver to hurry up, he whipped up the old steed, who, resenting this abrupt

termination to his drowsing reverie, kicked up his heels in a most undignified fashion and plunged into a gallop.

The girls began to giggle, and enjoyed themselves hugely at this little humorous twist, while holding on to the seat and each other for safety. Suddenly an ominous creak, a sudden jolt, a downward slide, and they found themselves screaming and clinging to one another in a frenzied effort to keep their equilibrium, while the driver, careening through the air, was frantically howling, "Whoa there! Whoa there!"

The horse for a moment paused in his untimely career, but, as he felt the carriage keel over with a jarring crash, he made another attempt to take to his heels.

But the driver was already on his feet, and, catching the plunging animal by the bridle, yelled for the girls to get out, as a wheel had come off. But it was quite unnecessary to tell them to "get out," for they had already tumbled and sprawled on the road, somewhat bewildered, but still sound as to limb and wind.

"Now what are we to do?" questioned Judith a minute later, as, with her hat awry and her face smeared with dust, she stood in the middle of the road and surveyed the dismantled vehicle. The other girls, more anxious about their wearing apparel than about the old conveyance, were trying to rid themselves of the dirt on their faces and clothes.

"Yer'll have to wait er spell, ladies," said their valiant Jehu, as, after a few pats to reassure the old horse that he was still there, he turned to inspect the wheel. "Clean off, by gosh!" he muttered dolefully.

"But what are we to do?" demanded Judith with some asperity. "We can't walk to Salem."

"Sure not!" The man scratched his head meditatively, looked forlornly up and down the road, and then, with a slap on his knee, cried, "By Jingo, I'll 'phone to the stable."

"The stable?" questioned the puzzled girls, while Rona cried, "Why, where is your 'phone?" just as if she thought the man had hidden it up his coat-sleeve.

"Up on the hill yonder, at Judge Howe's,— the gray house with the gables," was the answer. "He has a 'phone. Just take it easy, gals," he continued cheerily, "and I'll have a rig here in no time. Take a walk into the woods; perhaps yer'll find the old smuggler's cottage hereabouts somewhere; there's a secret closet in it that leads to the beach below."

This information sounded interesting, so, somewhat reconciled to their enforced wait, as the man started down the road, after tying the horse to a tree, they adjusted their disarranged apparel and started for the woods.

"Keep to the right of the path," sang out Judith to Margery, who was hurrying ahead of the others,

gathering the fragrant barberry blossoms, which grew in tempting profusion in a patch near. They had come to a point where the path branched, one side leading farther into the cool green of the forest, while the other twisted itself in a narrow footpath to the sea. But, determined to obey the man's injunction, they kept to the right, being rewarded in a moment or so by the glimmer of a tent beckoning to them in an opening beyond.

"Oh, that can't be the smuggler's cottage!" cried Margery. And then, as she hurried forward, came the glad cry, "Oh, girls, we've struck a camp in the woods! Do hurry!"

But the girls had already reached her side and found that they had arrived at a large clearing, where four or five tents stood grouped about. In the center of the open space were some blackened stones — evidently where the campers' hearth-fires had been. But Margery had discovered something else, for with exultant, curious eyes she was standing in front of a tree near one of the tents, reading a large wooden sign on which some words had been scrawled with a piece of charcoal.

The girls, a-quiver with curiosity, stood in front of the tree trying to decipher the printing on the board, which was somewhat smudged. Presently there came the sharp crack of a snapping twig, the thud of sud-

denly arrested feet, and they turned to see three Boy Scouts standing at one of the openings leading from the clearing, looking at them with dazed inquiry on their sun-tanned faces.

CHAPTER XIV

THREE GIRLS IN A BOAT

FOR a moment there was a strained silence, and then Judith, recovering from her embarrassment at being found trespassing on private grounds, started to make an apology. Before she could speak, however, Margery made a wild lunge forward, and, throwing herself into the arms of one of the Boy Scouts, shrilled excitedly, "Oh, it's Dan! It's Dan!"

The girls, at her unexpected action, stood awkwardly mute, their eyes staring in bewildered surprise. Then Rona exclaimed hurriedly, "Oh, it must be Margery's brother. Don't you remember, girls, she said she hoped she would see him in Boston."

Yes, it was Margery's brother, Dan, a well-known personage to the girls, if not by sight, surely by reputation, for he was, as Margery often said laughingly, "the love of her life, the joy of her eyes, and the hope of her heart." Unfortunately the brother and sister had been separated when left orphans on the death of their widowed mother, Dan being adopted by one of his father's brothers, while Margery was taken

into the family of one of her mother's sisters. Thus compelled to live in different States, they had become even more attached to one another than if they had remained together, and with a devout remembrance of their mother's love for them, in memory of her they had striven to keep this love warm by their affection for one another.

By this time Dan and Margery, made aware that they were the star performers in a very silent drama, finished their embraces, and the girl, elation shining from her eyes, led Dan forward and introduced him to her companions, who quickly explained how they came to find the camp.

Dan, who was a tall, broad-shouldered boy, with the same blue-gray eyes and winning manner that made Margery such a general favorite, now presented his companions, Scout Master Jack Hinton and Frank Wilbur. It was soon explained that the three Scouts were only a small part of the Wolf Patrol, from an inland town in Massachusetts, enjoying a three-weeks' camp by the sea.

The Scouts proved exemplary hosts, and it was not long before they were all having a very chatty time, in the course of which the girls told about their club, and how they came to be on a pilgrimage to Cape Ann. The young scout-master, Jack Hinton, who was a few years older than his companions,— in fact, he was tutoring some of the boys, and in this way working his

way through college,— was particularly interested in the Would-be-Better-Americans, and declared that he would like to show them a few places in the vicinity and help them trail the footsteps of the Puritans.

As the party was now enlarged by the addition of a few more Scouts, who had just come up from a swim in the sea, the girls were treated to a cool glass of root beer, with cheese and crackers, which the boys produced from a hidden crevice in the rocks, declaring that they kept these things handy, for they often had visitors. After a peep at their wireless outfit installed in one of the tents, and the various articles and handy contrivances the Scouts had for cooking, and the many necessities of camp life, Judith declared that they must hurry back to their driver.

"Oh, but you must come and see our motor-boat!" pleaded Dan.

"Oh, yes," added Jack Hinton; "and — I say, boys, why can't we give the young ladies a sail out to the Miseries and —"

"But why not *sail* the girls all the way to *Salem?*" abruptly finished Frank Wilbur. "For I'll warrant that they'll not be able to get away from here for some time unless we give them a lift."

"Oh, Dan, take us in the boat!" pleaded Margery, in a glow of delight. "That will be perfectly glorious sport."

"No reason why we shouldn't," seconded the scout-

master, " for our motor-boat holds a dozen at least. Come on, Tom," he called out to a freckle-faced, awkward-appearing youth, who had stood shyly in the background while his companions were entertaining the girls; " you are the skipper; you can pilot us through the channels O. K."

Tom grinned delightedly, and then they all started back for the road, on the way the boys telling of pleasant jaunts along the North Shore, and of the many places of interest among the caves on the rocks. But, to the girls' dismay, on reaching the road, they found that not only their driver was not in sight, but that the old vehicle and horse as well had mysteriously disappeared.

This settled beyond dispute the question of the girls' going in the boat with the Scouts, and they had turned their faces towards the beach when Rona suddenly cried, " Oh, girls, don't you think it would be a good thing if we could 'phone to Miss Marston and let her know we are coming by boat, for we shall be late, and I know she will worry."

This was voted a good scheme, and after Dan had pointed out a cottage on a bluff near, where he knew they had a telephone, he, Rona, and Margery hurried away to call up the rest of the party, who, Rona declared, would have arrived by this time at the Essex Hotel in Salem.

Rona's surmise proved correct, for Miss Marston

had just begun to wonder what made the three girls so late, and was inclined to blame herself for leaving them in the carriage alone, when word came from the office that some one wanted Miss Marston on the 'phone.

"Hello, Miss Marston. Is that you?" came Rona's cheery voice through the mouth-piece, and then in a few hurried words she explained the accident, adding that they had met some friends of Margery's, who were going to bring them to Salem in a motor-boat.

Miss Marston was rather insistent upon knowing who the friends were, but Rona assured her that she could not tell,— it was a surprise for the girls,— but that it was all right, and then rung off. Miss Marston was somewhat dubious as to the wisdom of this unexpected proceeding, and felt inclined to worry, but, on meeting Dr. Wayne in the hall and telling him of her dilemma, he assured her there was no need to fret, for the girls could not have any better chaperone than Judith, which young lady, by the way, the doctor ardently admired for her poise and dignity.

Ten minutes later, as the girls were just about to step into the motor-boat, Rona gave a surprised cry as she pointed to the prow of the little craft, where, in big white letters, was the name *Lady Arbella.*

Immediately the boys were besieged with questions as to how they had come to select this name, for Rona had quickly explained that it was the name of a



RONA GAVE A SURPRISE CRY AS SHE POINTED TO THE PROW OF THE LITTLE CRAFT.—*Page 230.*



lovely Puritan lady who had met a very sad fate at Salem.

"She was the daughter of the Earl of Lincoln," explained Judith somewhat shyly, in answer to a question from Margery, "and had been recently married to Sir Isaac Johnston, an ardent Puritan, who came over with Winthrop in 1630, sent by the same company that had sent Higginson.

"Up to the time of the coming of John Winthrop all the settlements in America had been governed by the powers in England," explained the girl; "but, as it had been decided by the company that it would be better to have the government vested in the colonies themselves, Winthrop was made governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. It is said that he was one of the most cultured of the signers of the Cambridge agreement,— the patent that gave the land to the Puritans. He was not only descended from wealthy and scholarly ancestors, but he was a man of deep piety, a philosopher, and a lawyer, and therefore an able representative of the desire for freedom,— the same spirit that had inspired the Separatists, or Pilgrims. The Puritans, you know, believed the same as the Pilgrims, only instead of separating from the Established Church," added Judith, "they remained within it, thinking to reform it.

"Winthrop arrived in June, the same month as Higginson the year before," went on the lady historian,

" in the flagship of the fleet, the *Arbella,* which had been named after the lovely Lady Arbella."

"'The good ship *Arbella* is leading the fleet[1]
Away to the westward, through rain-storm and sleet;
The white cliffs of England have dropped out of sight
As birds from the warmth of their nest taking flight
Into wider horizon, each fluttering sail
Follows fast where the *Mayflower* fled on the gale
With her resolute Pilgrims, ten winters before;
And the fire of their faith lights the sea and the shore.'"

A sudden loud clapping broke forth as Jack Hinton gave this verse in due appreciation of its timeliness. And then, after explaining that he had had the pleasure of reading of Winthrop's arrival from his " History of New England," he told how the Puritans first sighted the islands at the end of the cape near Rockport, which John Smith, when he explored these parts, had named " The Three Turks."

" Winthrop then sailed on and entered this bay, the Manchester Bay, through which we are now passing," continued young Hinton. " See, that is Baker's Island, and here, on this side," he pointed with his hand, " are the Miseries, the Great and Little Misery Islands.

" Yonder on that jutting piece of land, Gale's Point, or Bass-mer-side," pointing towards the mainland, " Winthrop and his party are said to have landed." And then again he was reciting:

[1] " The Lady Arbella," by L. Larcom.

"'And lo! on a golden June morning, a smell
As of blossoming gardens, borne over the swell
Of the weltering brine; cliff and headland that dip
Their green robes in the sea, leaning out to the ship.'"

"I think," he explained as he ended, "that that verse refers to the 'fine fresh smell from the shore' which Winthrop spoke of on first sighting the Three Turks."

"Oh, I am so glad we met you," said Rona, looking at the grave-faced young man with sparkling eyes, "for you are telling us things we can't read in a guide-book."

"But I am afraid I interrupted Miss Carvel's story."

"Oh, no, indeed," Judith hurriedly answered; "for I am enjoying what you have read. But please tell us more," she added coaxingly, "for I am only too glad to resign in your favor."

Thus urged, the young man went on and told how the fleet must have been sighted by the people at Salem, for Endicott arrived to welcome the governor and then carried him and his party to the settlement, where they "feasted on good venison pasty and jelly."

"On Sunday," continued Jack, "Masconoma, sagamore of the Indian tribe living in these regions, came aboard the ship and spent the day. No doubt he was an object of some curiosity, for this was the newcomers' first glimpse of the wild men of America."

"But were there not other women in the party, besides Lady Arbella?" asked Dan. "Seems to me I have heard about an Anne Bradstreet."

"Oh, yes," cried Judith; "she was a bride of sixteen, who had just been married to one of Winthrop's assistants, Simon Bradstreet. Her father, Thomas Dudley, was also a Puritan exile, and later became governor of the colony. Simon Bradstreet did, too, before he died, so Anne had the distinction of being the daughter of one governor and the wife of another."

"Yes, and she was also noted as a poetess," added Mr. Hinton. "She has been called our first American poetess, having written quaint old stuff, with such titles as:

"'The Tenth Muse, lately Sprung up in America, or several Poems Compiled with Great Variety of Wit and Learning, Full of Delight, Where especially is Contained a Complete Discourse and Description of the Four Elements, Constitutions, Ages of Man, Seasons, of the Year, together with an exact Epitome of the Monarchies, viz.: The Assyrian, Persian, Grecian, Roman. Also a Dialogue between Old England and New concerning the late troubles. With divers other pleasant and serious Poems, By a Gentlewoman in these parts.'"

By this time the girls were giggling, not only at the weird and grotesque title of this, the first poem of the

poetess, but at the glib manner in which young Hinton had rattled it off.

"By the Lord Harry," exclaimed Dan, with amused eyes, "do you mean to say that an editor would print such stuff?"

"Not now," laughed Jack, "but in those days, yes. But slow up a bit, Tom," he called out to their boatswain; "I want the young ladies to have a good view of the lighthouses on Baker's Island." For they had now reached that noted island, having been sailing in among the green inlets of the bay with no particular purpose in view, as they had all been so busy listening to the stories of the *Arbella* and her noted cargo.

Jack now recited "The Light-Houses," by Lucy Larcom, giving great emphasis to the following verse:

"'Two bright eyes awake all night
To the fierce moods of the sea;
Eyes that only close when light
Dawns on lonely hill and tree!
O kind watchers! teach us, too,
Steadfast courage, sufferance long!
Where an eye is turned to you,
Should a human heart grow strong.'"

After Dan had pointed out a house on shore peeping among the trees, saying that it was the home of the poetess, Lucy Larcom, to whom they were indebted for the quotations given by Jack, that young man was again heard softly repeating:

"'Ah! what pleasant visions haunt me[1]
As I gaze upon the sea!
All the old romantic legends,
All my dreams come back to me.'"

This reminded the girls of the many legends connected with the North Shore, and soon Dan was telling them how the wife of a fisherman, who had been stranded on one of the Miseries during a severe storm, had declared to her neighbors that during the night she had heard him call, "Wife, I have lost the boat!"

"She aroused the fishermen," Dan said, "but they, thinking that the woman was out of her mind, or had been dreaming, would not believe her until, won by her pleadings, they rowed to the island. There, sure enough, was the man, who had not only lost his boat, but insisted that he had called out just the words his wife had heard, for he said he knew that either God or his wife would hear him."

Jack now told the legend of the "Spectre Leaguers," which he said was in the "Magnalia Christi," by Cotton Mather, one of New England's old-time divines, who claimed he had been told it by a brother clergyman from Gloucester.

"The Cape Ann garrison," asserted Jack, "had been haunted by a number of queer-looking gentlemen in white waistcoats and breeches, who would not only mysteriously appear to the residents of the Cape and

[1] Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

then disappear, but it was said that at night they marched around the block-house, uttering most hideous howls and groans.

"Although they were pursued and shot by the Cape Ann folk, and must have been riddled with bullets, the bodies of these witches,— it was the time of witchcraft doings,—" smiled Jack, "were never found. Wearied at length by their fruitless pursuit of these funny little gentlemen in waistcoats and breeches, the garrison fell to reading their Bibles and praying, and, strange to say, this evidently had the desired effect, for

"'Never after mortal man
Saw the ghostly leaguers marching round the blockhouse of Cape Ann.'"[1]

The story of old Meg, the witch, who while in the form of a black crow was shot by some soldiers some distance from home, was also related by the young man. "No one would have believed," he continued, "that the crow was the old witch, although she had been reported as dead, until the silver buttons from the soldiers' uniforms which they had used for shot, were found in the crow."

But the sail was not all given to talking about the coming of Winthrop and the Lady Arbella, or even legend telling, for as the little launch chugged cheerily into one cove, and then another, passing fabled rock and island, the girls' eyes were keenly intent on the

[1] "The Garrison of Cape Ann," by J. G. Whittier.

seemliness of the scene before them. The white-sheeted sailboats skimming silver waters, whose sheen was dotted with picturesque rock islands, and the green-clad shores with their cottage homes, from which came peeping chimneys and winding paths, were but a part of a blur of beauty that long remained in memory of the joys of this sail. Then, too, to add to its pleasures the boys broke into snatches of melody, bits of merry, rollicking tunes, alive with life and harmony, finally ending with an old-time sea song, trolling it forth with such verve and gusto that the girls quickly caught the spirited swing and had soon joined with them in singing:

"So when you see a Gloucester (Brixham) boat
Go out to face the gales,
Think of the love that travels
Like light upon its sails."

But the musical "Singing Beach" of Manchester, the jutting crags of Rufe's chasm, whose tragic story was softened by its somber beauty under its tarn of sweet fern and bayberry bushes, and even the strange mystery of the Moving Rock at Squam did not lessen the impatience that had fastened itself upon the heart of Rona in her desire to reach Salem. For ever since she had seen the words, "Margaret Doane, Salem, Massachusetts," her brain had not ceased to strike to the name. Notwithstanding the many sights of the day, the jolly ride, and the joyousness of the sail, she

still heard the name, faint at times, and then again beating with a persistent pounding, as if trying to hurry her to the noted town.

But they finally reached the Essex Bridge of the witchcraft town, and after a hasty view of Dike Rock, where the boys said it was claimed that Winthrop had landed on reaching Salem, the girls hastened ashore, and with Dan and Mr. Hinton hurried to the hotel.

Every one was rejoiced to see them again, and anxious to hear of their adventure, for the girls had been on the point of expiring, Peggy claimed, ever since they had heard from Miss Marston of the good luck that had befallen them. Donald and Dan immediately fraternized, after sizing each other up as "jolly chaps," and then after plans had been made to meet on the morrow and see the town, the Scouts hastened back to camp.

Having an hour or so to spare the following morning before setting forth to trail the Puritan Footsteps, Rona and Judith sallied forth to see if they could find Margaret Doane. Unfortunately, no directory could be located, and persistent inquiries failed to find anybody who knew of any one by the name of Doane.

Judith, finally seeing that Rona's spirits had sunk to zero, dragged her into a drug-store to brighten her up with an ice-cream soda. As the girls sat sipping the creamy drink, Judith keyed to renewed attempt

in their trail, noting the old white-haired clerk puttering among the bottles on the shelf, asked him if he knew of any one in town by the name of Doane, adding that it was of the utmost importance that they know, and that they were looking for a lady by the name of Margaret Doane.

"Doane, Doane," repeated the old man in a puzzled tone, "no, I am afraid I do not," he finally decided. "If any one by that name lived here, I should probably know, as I have lived in Salem all my life. And yet," he took off his glasses and leisurely wiped them on an old chamois he took from his pocket, "the name somehow sounds familiar."

At this point a young girl standing near, to whom Rona had been attracted on account of her keen face and bright eyes — she looked so trim and neat in her freshly laundered shirt-waist and natty sailor hat — broke in with, "Why, Mr. Dorman, Mrs. Wyeth on Chestnut Street was a Doane! Don't you remember? She came from Boston. She is a widow now," she continued, addressing the two girls, "and very eccentric, and quite old. My grandmother used to know her. Any one could tell you the house on Chestnut Street, it has a gambrel roof."

With brightly gleaming eyes Rona and Judith thanked the clerk and the young lady, and hurried up Essex Street, which some one said would bring them to Chestnut Street, "noted for its old-time archi-

tecture and beautiful trees," Judith read from a little circular she had picked up in the store.

But Rona was too busy when they reached the street to think of trees or architecture, as her eyes hurriedly scanned one house after another seeking among the tree-tops for a gambrel roof.

"Ah, this must be the one!" she finally cried, as they came to a halt in front of an old-time mansion embowered in trees, whose "upper gambrel," as Judith called the higher roof, was edged with a low white railing. As Rona stepped upon the queer little porch with its colonial doorway, and vigorously rapped with the brass knocker, Judith hummed with sprightly air,

> "'Born in a house with a gambrel-roof,—[1]
> "Gambrel!— Gambrel!"— Let me beg
> You'll look at a horse's hinder leg,—
> First great angle above the hoof,—
> That's the gambrel; hence gambrel-roof.'"

But the door was standing open, and within the doorway stood a little serving-maid, whose simple dark gown with its wide turned-over white collar and cuffs made the girls think of the maidens of Pilgrim fame. In response to their inquiry for Mrs. Wyeth she ushered them into a large square room, dark with shadows, antique furniture, rows of dingy-looking forebears on the wall, and a general air of mustiness which pervaded the room.

[1] Oliver Wendell Holmes.

In front of a dimly burning old-fashioned sconce near the door, the girls waited, Rona striving with grim determination not to let her nervousness overcome her. But at that moment a soft footstep caused the girls to look up, to see a queer, diminutive figure, standing in the doorway, peering down at them with bright, piercing eyes.

CHAPTER XV

MY LITTLE KINSWOMAN

As Rona stared at the odd-looking figure framed in the doorway, she vaguely wondered if she were not in the wrong house, for surely this little lady in a short-waisted gown tied with a sash, baby-fashion, could not be old. But as she came slowly forward into the light of the dimly burning candle, the girl saw that her hair was snowy white, and that her skin was yellow and shiny, like parchment, while a network of wrinkles seamed her eyes and mouth.

The girl's throat was dry and parched, but, forcing herself on her feet, she cried, "I beg your pardon, madam, for this intrusion, but I was told to ask for Mrs. Wyeth."

"That is my name," replied the lady with terse formality. "What can I do for you?" From under a tangle of silvery curls her piercing eyes gazed down at the girl searchingly.

Rona colored with embarrassment, and then stammered confusedly, "Why, I am looking — for a lady by the name of Margaret — Doane. I was told —"

"Yes, but what do you want of Margaret Doane?" the lady inquired sharply. "And who is this?" she added, eyeing Judith with the same inquisitive stare.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," cried the distressed Rona. "This is my friend, Miss Judith Carvel, and we —"

"And my friend's name," interrupted Judith with ready wit, "is Miss Rona Hillis."

"Indeed," was the answer in a distant tone, as the lady gazed first at one girl and then the other with the manner of one who was slightly bored.

"I have come," attempted Rona again, "to see — that is, a lady — told me —" Then almost savagely she blurted out, "A lady told me that your name before you — were married — was Margaret Doane. But I see I have made a mistake. Come, Judith," she said, turning towards the door.

"Hoity-toity, young lady! There is no need to be in such a hurry." The lady's manner had changed from one of bored indifference to curious interest, as seen by the eager glance of her eye and the kindlier tone in her voice. "Yes, my name is Margaret Doane. Now, what can I do for you?"

Rona turned back, for she saw that if she was to make any headway with this cranky old lady, as she inwardly termed her, she would have to control her feelings. "Why, we have just come from Plymouth," she replied. "We are traveling with a party of girls, chaperoned by one of our teachers, Miss

Marston of Reval Hall, on Montague Street, Brooklyn. While I was in Pilgrim Hall I saw an old-fashioned salt-cellar with a card attached, on which was the name, 'Margaret Doane, Salem, Massachusetts,' and I thought"— the girl hesitated slightly —"that perhaps you could tell me something about the Doane family."

"What do you want to know for?" was abruptly hurled at Rona, bringing the girl to her feet again, with her face all in a flame. But Judith came to her rescue.

"Why, my friend's name is Rowena Doane. She was lost when a baby and adopted by a Mr. Hillis. She is very anxious to see if she can trace her parents."

Judith stopped abruptly, for the little lady had turned and was looking at Rona sharply. "So you think you are a Doane, eh? Come here," she imperiously commanded, grabbing Rona by the arm and almost dragging her under the light. For a moment she stared at the girl silently with a searching look in her keen eyes. Then Rona smiled, although she was visibly trembling under this merciless scrutiny; but oh, she must make herself pleasant and —. But that smile seemed to have wrought a wonderful transformation in the strange woman, for she stepped nearer the girl, and, pushing her face closer to Rona's, stared fixedly. Then she cried suddenly, "Yes, you

are a Doane! I see it in that smile. And, child, you look like *her!*" Then she dropped into a chair and began to rock herself spasmodically to and fro.

The two girls stared at each other in frightened silence, while Judith inwardly questioned the woman's sanity.

All at once Rona, with keen intuition, sensed the situation, and, going swiftly forward, laid her hand softly on the old lady's head, saying, "Oh, I'm so sorry! How did you lose her?"

At the sound of the fresh young voice vibrant with sympathy, the white head was raised and Rona saw that the tears were trickling down her cheeks. "Oh, she died,— my daughter,— the only child I ever had. She was burned to death!"

Her voice had sunk to a dismal whisper, but before the horrified girls could express their sympathy she had risen to her feet, crying: "Bah! what a fool I am! Why, my daughter has been dead and buried almost half a century. No, do not pity me," she flung out defiantly; "I am used to it." A grim smile curled the woman's mouth, although her voice quivered pathetically.

"Yes, she has turned to ashes long ago, and I — well, I am still here, worrying out my life like a dog with a bone. She was just your age when she went,"— again her voice had softened as her eyes rested on the girlish face upturned to hers. Then,

with a sudden abruptness, she demanded, "So you want to know about the Doanes? Very well, but tell me your story first."

Rona in a few words related her history, and then, with her eyes bright with anticipation, cried, "But oh, if you are a Doane, perhaps you could tell me — something —"

"Yes, you are a Doane, there is no doubt of that," answered the old lady, as she examined the tiny ring hanging from the gold chain; "but I am afraid," she said somewhat doubtfully, "that I cannot be of much help to you, for I was left an orphan at a very early age, and have really never heard much about the Doanes. They are not a large family, but they were early settlers, I have been told. The name of the Doane who came over here from England —" She hesitated a moment and then said, "There, I believe I have forgotten. To tell the truth, I have never been very much interested in my family genealogy. But there are some Doanes living in Boston,— sort of distant cousins of mine. Now, if you could meet them; but I am afraid they are away. But why not look up the Doane book? I have heard that there is one, and you would probably find it in the Public Library in Boston."

"Did you ever hear of a Doane who had lost a child?" Rona's voice was so pathetically pitiful that the old lady's heart was evidently touched, for al-

though she shook her head and said that she had not, still she seemed to take an interest in the questioner. After telling her all she knew, which, as she had claimed, was very little, she began to question the girls as to their stay in Salem.

Judith, who saw that Rona was struggling with her disappointment, and who had quickly comprehended that beneath the old lady's brusqueness there was a kindly warmth of feeling, was soon busy telling her all about their trip to Plymouth, the name of their club, and so on.

"Humph!" commented Mrs. Wyeth amusedly, "so you are trying to become better Americans. Well, I admire your patriotism and wish you success. But perhaps," she suggested suddenly, "I can be of some service to you while you are in Salem, for I have lived here ever since I was a girl, and know many of the old families. And then," she added, turning with a kindly gleam in her eyes towards Rona, "I would like to help this little kinswoman of mine, for I know by her smile"— her eyes saddened in sudden memory —"that she must belong to *some one* of the Doanes."

"Oh, do you really think I am a Doane?" Rona's voice was tremulous with feeling; "for oh, I am so anxious to belong to somebody."

"I am quite sure of it," nodded the strange little old lady. And, then to the girls' amazement, for she

had acted so unkindly at first, she rang a bell, and in a short space the two guests were enjoying a drink of spiced julep and some molasses cake.

After the girls had told of their plans while in Salem to have some kind of an entertainment in honor of the Puritans, they thanked Mrs. Wyeth for her kind hospitality and hurried away, but not before their hostess had made them promise to come and see her again.

"I am much interested in my little kinswoman," she continued, "and will be pleased to know if she finds those lucky parents of hers." And then with the gleam of a tear in the bright, twinkling eyes, and a "God bless you, dears!" the old lady had quickly closed the door.

"Do not be discouraged," admonished Judith to Rona, as they lingered a moment to admire a quaint mansion on the corner, with a beautiful doorway, "you have learned without a doubt, that you have a right to the name, America's Daughter, that Peggy gave you. To be sure, we have no tangible clews, but wait until you see the Doane book."

Judith spoke so hopefully that Rona's heart was cheered, and on the morning's "pilgrimage of sites," as Peggy called it, her heart thrilled with a strange feeling of hope.

The boys took the Footsteppers first to Washington Square, where they saluted with due reverence the

statue of the old Planter, Roger Conant. Then they walked to a secluded cove on an elevated point near the North River, where the Planters had established their temporary homes, and later walked to Essex Street, to the location where it was claimed they eventually settled.

The site of the Endicott house on Washington Street, known in the early days as the "Governour's fayre house," and that of Higginson and several other Puritan notables, as well as the First Church, on the site of the first little meeting-house built in 1634, were next in order.

The girls were delighted to find that it was in Town Square — the one-time market-place — where Endicott cut out with his sword the cross of St. George from the English flag. After the doctor had told of the incident, as read from Hawthorne's "Twice Told Tales," Poco dramatically rendered:

"'He had shorn with his sword the cross from out[1]
The flag, and cloven the Maypole down,
Harried the heathen round about,
And whipped the Quakers from town to town.
Earnest and honest, a man at need
To burn like a torch for his own harsh creed
He kept with the flaming brand of his zeal,
The gate of the holy common weal.'"

Judith followed by telling of Endicott's going to Merry Mount, now Quincy, where Thomas Morton,

[1] "The King's Missive," by J. G. Whittier.

a pettifogging attorney from England, had not only sold fire-water to the Indians, but had set up a May-pole. Around this he had induced the Indians and their squaws to dance, while he and his men joined hands with the lassies in beaver coats and sang boisterous songs. "But, after all," ended Judith, "it took the valiant little Captain from Plymouth to settle the roisterers and arrest Morton, who was finally sent back to England."

The place in the square where the old town-pump stood, made famous in Hawthorne's "Rill from an Old Town Pump," interested the girls. Rona thereupon had one of her "visions," and pictured the fair Lady Arbella and the gentle Anne, on their first visit to Salem, tripping up to the old spring in farthingale and high-heeled slippers to quaff of its sparkling waters. The gallantry of the grim old Endicott, whose heart must have throbbed a little more quickly as his eyes gleamed in mute admiration of the two young brides, was picturesquely portrayed.

As Rona finished this portrayal she laughingly vowed that all the time she was talking that a witch had been peering at her from over Peggy's shoulder. "And it was mounted on a broomstick, Peg," the girl's eyes gleamed teasingly, "and it had a black cat on its shoulder. Why, didn't you hear it meow?" she cried, the little dimple at the corner of her mouth pleading with the boys to second her in her effort to

tease that young lady. For Peggy had declared that the old-time quaintness and housewives' tales of Salem were so suggestive of witches that she expected one to jump out at her on every corner she turned.

Well, if the boys hadn't heard the meow, they made up for it by immediately starting up such a medley of cat-calls and meows, that Miss Marston was driven to stuff her fingers in her ears and beg for mercy. Rona's little byplay, however, had the effect of enlivening the party, and in merry banter they wended their way to the City Hall, while Jack tried to conjure up more witches as he intoned with fearsome voice,

"How oft, half fearfully, we prowled [1]
Around those gabled houses, quaint and old,
Whose legends, grim and terrible,
Of witch and ghost that used in them to dwell,
Around the twilight fire were told;
While huddled close with anxious ear
We heard them quivering with fear;
And if the daylight half o'ercame the spell,
'Twas with a lingering dread
We oped the door and touched the stinging bell."

At the City Hall they curiously examined an old parchment, beautifully engrossed in an obsolete handwriting. It proved to be a warranty deed to all the land in Salem from the heirs of the great Indian chief, Nanepashement, to the selectmen of the town in trust for the people.

The signatured marks of the Indian chiefs, who

[1] William Wetmore Story.

acted as witnesses to the extraordinary document, were very odd, such as designs of arrows, bows, fish-hooks, tomahawks, tobacco-pipes, and many other articles of household use, or implements of war.

After locating the site of the first Court House, with its watch-tower, and the old jail, the little cavalcade swept through what was once Prison Lane to Governor Bradstreet's house, which at one time stood where the Salem Athenæum now stands.

They were all interested in hearing the doctor tell how this old governor, at the age of eighty-six, placed himself at the head of a revolutionary movement and snatched the sword from the hated Governor Andros, whom he imprisoned. Three years later he delivered it to Sir William Phips, the new governor, under a charter from William III, and became his assistant.

The old man, the doctor stated, not only outlived all the members of the Winthrop company, dying at the age of ninety-five, but, on the death of his wife, the poetess Anne, married again. On learning that he was buried in the ancient cemetery on Charter Street, the party made this their next stopping-place, where they saluted his monument and the graves of one or two of the Puritan notables, and then hurried back to the hotel for luncheon.

As the afternoon was to be a "witch find," another one of Peggy's expressions, the old witch-house on the corner of Essex and North streets was the first

stopping-place. But when the girls learned that nothing of any importance had taken place there,— its old-timeliness sadly marred by a twentieth-century drug store under it in one corner,— their interest waned, and they hurried to the Joshua Ward House, noted as being the place where the witch sheriff had lived.

It did sound thrilling, Peggy declared, to be told that when he died, still a young man, the tide of superstition had turned so greatly against those who had taken any part in the slaughter of the supposed witches, that the family were forced to bury his body in the cellar, to escape the fury of the now repentant villagers.

"Well," asserted Rona, as they turned to make their way to the Court House, "I can't see why just a few silly girls should have made all this disturbance."

"Yes, Miss Rona," returned Dr. Wayne; "it is a difficult thing to understand in these days of enlightenment. But you must remember that in the early days anything for which a cause could not be assigned was immediately attributed to the supernatural, for it was the only way man's imagination could account for the marvelous wonders with which he was surrounded.

"The history of the Chaldean priests of Assyria, of the Brahmins of India,— in fact, all of the ancient religious beliefs have been recitals in some form or

shape of the superstitions of mankind. Not only the simple and ignorant, but the learned and scientific scholars for ages have believed in the Black Art of Demonology, or witchcraft.

"Witchcraft," explained the gentleman, "originally meant delving into the unknown,— the art of divination; but in the Middle Ages it resolved itself into the belief that there could be a formal and actual compact with the devil. Roger Bacon, Joan of Arc, as well as Luther, if you remember, were all accused of having entered into a pact with the evil one.

"Before the Salem delusion came, hundreds of people had been burned in England for witchcraft, while in Scotland the number ran up into the thousands. It was not surprising, then, that this error should cross the seas, and that the colony should become imbued with the belief that by killing a witch they were obeying the Biblical commandment, 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.'

"Witches were supposed to have the power of afflicting whomsoever they desired. They could throw people into convulsions, it was claimed," smiled the doctor, "by ocular fascination, that is, by looking at them, which gave rise to the term, 'the evil eye.' They were also accredited with the power of reading people's thoughts, of imparting information as to the spiritual world, and of being able to assume any shape they pleased. Some people even went so far as to

affirm that a strange, impalpable fluid was transmitted from the eyes of the witch to the body of the bewitched. These evil practices were first performed on puppets, or rag-dolls, or the figures of animals stuck with pins, as whatever was inflicted on them would be felt by the victims.

"Now," continued the gentleman, "take into consideration the powers attributed to the witches, that the belief prevailed that the Indians were devil-worshipers, that several executions had taken place in Boston as early as 1648, that the fanciful picture of His Satanic Majesty was on the frontispiece of the catechism, and that the rustle of a leaf or the flutter of a bird's wing in the forest was interpreted as witches' whispers, and you can easily imagine how the inhabitants of the little town fell an easy prey to the witch delusion."

Being somewhat puzzled on reading the bronze tablet on a building opposite the site of the first court house, which stated that it was in this edifice that many of those accused of witchcraft had been tried and condemned, the doctor explained that the first court for these witchcraft trials was convened by Sir William Phips, the first royal governor of Massachusetts Province,— although it has been claimed that he had no warrant for any such procedure,— and was composed of noted and learned "governors" and judges from Salem and Boston. The court opened in June,

and continued its sittings until September. There was an execution in June, when five persons were hanged, and another in July, when five more were executed; and in September eight more met their death, which made up the nineteen, including the pressing to death of Giles Corey, three days before the final execution.

"By this time the people had begun to regain their senses," went on Dr. Wayne; "for, as people of high standing were accused, the dignitaries became alarmed and no spectral evidence was admitted. One can imagine the nature of the evidence, however, when, if a callous spot was found on the victim, it was considered a sure sign of guilt, known as the 'devil's seal,'—the spot which he had touched, and which, in time, had become hardened.

"It was also claimed that a witch could not say the Lord's Prayer; that is, if the suspect failed to repeat it correctly, even to the missing of a word, he was declared a witch. When the wife of a noted minister of Beverly, who had been one of the most bitter of those to 'cry out' upon a witch, as well as the wife of the governor himself, were accused, Governor Phips ordered the release of all those in jail, whether condemned or not, and hundreds left the prison for their homes."

The site of the home of Bridget Bishop was the next number on the program of the "witch find." Here, it was stated, puppets were found. "Not a

strange thing," commented the doctor, " when a piece of flannel or a rag with a pin in it was called a puppet." After a visit to a modest frame house made from the timbers of the old jail, they repaired to the Court-House, and the eyes of the girls opened wide as they viewed a little glass case in which was a number of rusty and black-looking pins, said to be the famous witch-pins supposed to have been in use by some of the condemned. A discolored legal document, too, was eagerly examined, as it was the death-warrant of the poor, harmless creature, Bridget Bishop. Erasures of the sheriff were duly noted, as scratched-out words, ink-stains, and so on, and yet it was correct in the wording of the record of a monstrous crime.

They now hired a couple of taxis and drove to Gallows Hill. But they did not remain long on this grim and desolate crag, with its grisly reminder of a solitary tree from the boughs of which were suspended the innocent martyrs to the ignorance and superstition of a past century.

As it was the highest eminence about, however, the girls had a good view of the quaint old town, with its odd streets, old-time architecture, and its steeples and spires thrust skyward, as if in mute appeal for the hardened ones on earth. Here public buildings, moss-grown church-yards, rotting wharves, and the placid waters of its harbor, where ships, loaded with

wares from the marts of all nations once lay moored at its wharves, told of Puritan site, of weird and grewsome witch-tale, of Revolutionary patriots, of great merchants and sea-kings, and of a commerce that was world-wide. Surely it was a place to hold in high esteem, if only for the glory and fame of its ancient days.

On their return to the hotel two unexpected things occurred. The first was the receiving of a letter by Rona, a very mysterious letter evidently, from a very mysterious person, for there was a great deal of discussion as to its contents. The girls' eyes gleamed merrily in anticipation of something that was going to happen, a something that certainly was unusual, for it was a thing that they had never heard of before, but nevertheless it meant a good time, as well as a somewhat mysterious one.

The second surprise, if it could be called that, was a telegram for Donald, calling him back to West Point. "No," he explained to the disappointed girls, "my furlough is not up, but one of the professors who has been away has unexpectedly returned to the Post, and, as he is going to coach me in some studies that I am very anxious to stand high in, that means that my pleasure trip is shortened."

Of course there were many doleful exclamations, for the girls were reluctant to part with their new friend. It was true that they had only been together

for a few days,— something over a week,— but as Donald and the doctor had entered into the spirit of trailing the American footsteps so interestedly, Peggy declared that they wouldn't have a bit of fun after Donald had gone.

But Donald, by some mysterious words,— Judith declared it was a witch incantation,— suddenly cheered up the lamenting Peggy, and, to their surprise, when she bade him good-by at the depot, she appeared unusually elated. The girls wondered what had worked the charm, but, as the young lady refused to tell, they were fain to set their heads together in a guessing game, in which, however, no one seemed to win the prize.

CHAPTER XVI

THE WITCH CIRCLE

RONA and Dan the following morning were walking down Washington Street, when the girl, with startled eyes, suddenly cried in sharp dismay, "Oh, Dan, they have gone without us!" She stopped and stared at the rest of the sight-seers, who had been waiting for them on the corner, but who had suddenly hailed and entered a car.

Dan looked at her blankly for a moment and then exclaimed, "If that isn't the meanest trick to play on a fellow, for I told Jack we were only going up the street to see the site of the Samuel Shattuck house, and to wait for us!"

"And I thought we would get there first," lamented Rona with troubled eyes; "for the girls were going to get some films for their kodaks, and some postal views."

"Jack must have thought we were with the bunch when he hailed the car. But, oh, I say, Miss Rona, we'll take an automobile! See, there's one standing at the station now. Gee whiz! We'll beat them at

their own game and reach Danvers before they do, after all." And then, before Rona could protest, Dan was racing across the street. A moment's parley with a chauffeur, and he was beckoning for her to hurry over.

"Oh, do you really think we ought to do it?" asked the girl somewhat dubiously, as they were about to enter the car; for she knew that Miss Marston was very particular that the girls should not walk or ride with any of the boys unless they were accompanied by one of the girls or a chaperone. Still, this was different, she argued to herself, for they were going to meet the rest of the party.

"Why not?" queried Dan. "It will be a good joke on the rest of the crowd, especially on Jack, old boy," Dan grinned broadly, "for he planned to be your escort to-day."

"He did?" questioned Rona with surprised eyes. "Well, that is a good joke, after your telling him, too. But," she added archly, "wasn't I going to have anything to say about his being my escort?" and then she added with engaging frankness, "But I would rather be with you."

Dan turned all colors from sheer delight at this frank admission from Rona, for it had been nip and tuck betwen the two young men ever since they had met the girl whose soft brown eyes and bright animation had taken them captive.

But the girl's face was scarlet, for it had suddenly come to her that perhaps she had been too frank in making this admission. Her face resumed its natural tints, however, in a moment, and her eyes glowed with pleasure as the car whizzed them in the direction of the noted Salem village, now called Danvers, where they were to trace the witch steps from the very inception of the diabolical delusion.

The ride to the witch village presented several surprises to Rona, as her companion pointed out, in a field at the foot of a hill, an old weather-eaten house where George Jacobs, one of the witchcraft victims, used to live. "He was the aged grandfather of Abigail Williams, one of the Witch Circle girls," explained Dan, "and used to laugh most heartily at the antics of the possessed damsel. It seemed that these witch-finders used to accuse any one who was aged, ill, or in anyway crippled, with being Satan's emissary."

Another surprise came when the car halted, and Dan hurried Rona down a little side street, where he showed her the sprouts of an old pear-tree which, he explained, had been set out by Governor Endicott, and that was said to be the oldest cultivated fruit-tree in New England.

When they arrived at Danvers Square, Rona exclaimed at the picturesqueness of an old gambrel-roof house on a corner, which Dan said was the Page

house, where, during Revolutionary days, a famous tea-party was held on the roof.

"A tea-party on the roof!" echoed Rona. "Why, do you mean they all sat up there and drank tea?"

"That's just what I mean," answered the boy. "For it seems that Madame Page had been forbidden by her husband, Captain Jeremiah Page, a staunch patriot and colonel of an Essex regiment, to allow any one to drink tea under his roof; it was during the time of the ban on tea. The wilful dame, however, determined to have her way, and yet obey her lord and master, invited her guests to the roof-top and gave them a social hour and a cup of the beverage rendered famous by the Boston Tea-Party. Why, every one in Salem can tell you about Madame Page and her Gambrel-Roof-House Tea-Party."

Rona's eyes brightened suddenly, and then, with an odd little smile curving her mouth, she drew forth the mysterious letter she had received the night before, and handed it to Dan, saying, "Well, I guess Madame Page isn't going to be the only one to hold a Gambrel-Roof-House Tea-Party."

Dan stared at the little brown card a moment and then slowly read:

"Dame Wyeth presents good wishes to Mistress Rona Hillis and her friend, Mistress Judith Carvel, and requests ye delights of their company and of their mates, 'The Daughters of America,' at a Gambrel-

Roof-House Tea-Party to take place on ye nineteenth day of ye eighth month of ye year nineteen hundred and sixteen. Ye company will assemble by the ringing of the town clock at ye hour of eight, and are duly requested to bring teacups for a neighborly chat, and come gowned in ye apparel suited to ye times of ye Puritans.

"With ye best regards of
"MARGARET DOANE WYETH."

"Oh, isn't that the dandiest invitation, and isn't she the dearest?" And then Rona told of how she and Judith had called on Mrs. Wyeth, and what an eccentric but lovely old lady she had proved to be.

"We have all been puzzling our brains as to what a Gambrel-Roof-House Tea-Party could possibly be, and now we know. Oh, I am so glad I ventured to hunt up this Margaret Doane, who now claims to be my kinswoman, and who I see wants to make our stay in Salem pleasant."

"Lucy Larcom has written a poem about this Gambrel-Roof-House Tea-Party," ventured Dan, after a moment's pause; "and if Jack were here, he could recite it for you." There was a glint of a dare in the boy's eyes as he looked down at Rona and mentioned Jack, as if in a challenge for her to tell him again that she preferred his company to that young man's.

But Rona was busy thinking about the Tea-Party. "O dear!" she lamented a little dolefully; "isn't it

too bad you boys haven't been invited, too, for then you could impersonate some of the old Puritans and Planters, the way we girls are going to do. Oh, we have had the jolliest time planning our costumes."

"Yes, it would be dandy," replied Dan lamely, but with an odd little gleam in his gray-blue eyes. Then he started to say something, but evidently changed his mind, for he shut his lips tightly, as if bent on keeping a secret.

But they had now arrived in the witch neighborhood, and presently were traversing a well-trodden path in a field off the street, to where a solitary stone in a grass-grown space marked the site of the former Ministry House. This house, once surrounded by blooming gardens and orchards, was the home of the Reverend Samuel Parris, a one-time merchant of the West Indies, and where his daughter and a number of her associates used to hold circles by hearing Tituba, a colored woman, tell old Indian folk-lore tales, and read their fortunes.

As they stood looking at the sunken cavity that had once been a cellar, keenly anxious to sight some new find that had never been discovered before,— a forlorn hope that clung tenaciously to each member of the party whenever an old landmark was visited,— Dan's eyes suddenly widened. His face broke into a smile as he pointed down the street to where the rest of the

party were footing it, post-haste, evidently having seen the first arrivals from a distance.

There were loud cries of surprise and of joy,—and then everybody became intensely interested in the old site. As they looked about and saw that it was indeed a forsaken place, the doctor said it had been ever since the Salem people had realized, with morbid horror, the terrible havoc that had been created by the delusion of a group of silly maidens. The Reverend Mr. Parris had been compelled to leave the neighborhood, as a result of the hatred of the villagers towards the instigators of the unholy war against the innocent.

As the doctor and Miss Marston wandered over to a bank of aromatic thyme near, the girls withdrew themselves into a little group, and began to whisper and nod mysteriously. The boys, divining that they were intruders, also gathered into a group a few feet away, and soon began to laugh and whisper as mysteriously as their companions, so that the doctor and the Best Beloved were much mystified.

The doctor mildly inquired of the lady if she thought that the young people had become bewitched by some subtle charm that still haunted the fatal spot. But he was assured by his companion, with a smile, that as far as the girls were concerned she was quite used to their getting mysterious and excited now and

then, as their minds were filled with their plans to learn about the great ones, and at the same time get some fun out of the acquired knowledge. "As for the boys," she ended, "perhaps they are just trying to get even with the girls for showing them that they can get along without them."

But time was now called, and the several séances came to an abrupt end, as they all hurried to the site of old Deacon Ingersoll's house, where in a "great room" many of the afflicted ones gave their testimony. The site of the witch meeting-house, where some of the preliminary trials were held, the Putnam homestead where lived Ann, aged thirteen, who belonged to the Witch-Circle, as well as the homes of many other witchcraft victims, as Goody Osborn, John Proctor, and Rebecca Nurse, were now visited.

The last-named lady, a gentlewoman and a great-grandmother, notwithstanding that forty of her neighbors signed a paper protesting against the accusation, and testifying to her exemplary Christian character, was put in chains, tried, and acquitted, and then tried again, and, on an ordered verdict of "guilty," was finally executed.

On a grassy eminence under the shade of tall pines the girls read on a granite shaft, erected in the Nurse family burying-ground, the pathetic verses written by the poet Whittier, as a tribute to the noble Christian martyr. After reading on a neighboring tablet the

names of the forty who dared in those times of fearsome dread to put forth a word in defense of their neighbor and friend, the witch-trail ended. After saying good-by to the Scouts the girls hurried back to the hotel, where they spent the afternoon mysteriously busy over an impending good time.

On the following evening, as the graying shadows of twilight merged into the darkness of night, a couple of automobiles whizzed up Center Street in Danvers, to the site of the Ministry House. As the occupants of the cars alighted — each one with a mysterious bundle — and hurried to the sunken cavity that marked the site of the cellar, if one of the villagers of 1692 could have materialized at this auspicious moment, they would have declared that the Witch-Circle girls had returned to life. For this group of maidens, in quaintly flowered gowns, Puritan caps, and white kerchiefs, were most fair representations of the possessed damsels of witchcraft fame.

Presently the mystery of each bundle was explained, as a few of these would-be-Puritan maidens knelt in the shadows and applied a match to a bundle of fagots they had piled on the ground. As a bluish flame zigzagged upward from the snapping logs into circling rings of smoke, they all linked hands and circled about it with light, tripping step.

Suddenly they came to a halt, and as the fire's flames seethed in riotous twirl, lighting up their faces

with reddish, fantastic gleams, each one held up an uncanny, odd-looking object that dangled and flopped about in a strange, uncouth manner. The girls held these objects high above their heads, while repeating a jumble of words that sounded to Dr. Wayne and Miss Marston,— who, as the two chaperones, were seated on the bank of aromatic thyme near,— like some weird incantation.

There was a tense pause, and then a voice, loud and firm — it was Judith's — rang out with, "I condemn all those girls of witchcraft fame, who, during the winter of 1692 held a circle at the house of Minister Parris, that once stood on the spot where these fagots burn. With undue curiosity they did try to peer into the future, while listening to weird and grewsome ghost and witch tales as told by Tituba, Mr. Parris's Indian servant. As these damsels fed upon these unwholesome tales and magic doings, from playing at being bewitched, by crawling under tables, mewing like cats, and such antics, they finally began to 'cry out' upon the good and aged in the village and vicinity." She held up one of the queer-dangling objects and gave it a vicious jab with a pin as she cried, "As I prick this puppet with a pin I cry anathema maranatha on them and their foolishness!"

As her voice ceased, the cry was taken up by a chorus of maidens, who wailed forth, "Anathema maranatha!" with such woeful lamentation, while

viciously jabbing their puppets with pins, that the Best Beloved and the Wiseacre burst into laughter.

As all eyes were curiously alight, another maiden stepped to the fire, and, holding up the queer object in her hand, cried, "In condemnation of Elizabeth Parris, aged nine, daughter of the Reverend Mr. Parris, as being one of the Witch-Circle maidens who did 'cry out' upon the innocent, I stick this puppet with a pin!"

"Anathema maranatha," again wailed the chorus of Puritan maidens, "on all those who believe in ghosts, goblins, witches, or any of the unseemly things evoked by the imagination."

"In condemnation of Mary Walcott, a neighbor of the child Elizabeth,"— the voice sounded like Rona's, —"who did dally with an egg and spoon to determine her future lord's calling, while her mates declared that a specter did arise in the shape of a coffin, I prick this puppet with this pin." There was a sharp prod of the pin into the dangling object, and again came the cry of "Anathema maranatha," while a general pin-digging took place as a tribute to all those who repeat housewives' tales and unseemly gossip.

"In condemnation of Abigail Williams," came in loud voice from Poco, "whose unseemly antics and false testimony did cause the death of her aged grandfather, George Jacobs, I cry anathema maranatha!" And again the wail of denunciation sounded forth, and

once more each puppet was stabbed with violent zeal.

Ah, but is this the gentle Betty who is speaking so vehemently as she boldly denounces: "This puppet I hold in my hands represents the evil wrought by Ann Putnam. As a member of the Witch Circle she caused much harm by her unjust declarations as a witch-finder. By reason that the said Ann did live to be a maiden lady of godly character, and repented of the evil she had wrought by her malicious conduct, — such confession being now on record in the church book,— I simply cry out upon her and stick this puppet with a pin." The chorus of feminine voices united their cries with hers, and now intoned with soft note, "Out I say! Out I say! upon the evil by which this damsel was possessed!"

Now another maiden has stepped within the firelight's glare. It is Peggy, who in vigorous denunciation, calls out: "I condemn and denounce the Indian servant Tituba, who beguiled and led astray the young maidens by her grewsome Indian tales, her goblin yarns, and the telling of fortunes. Aye, and this Tituba did tell of the trysting-place on the village green where she avowed Satan held high carnival amid the din and clamor of mewing cat, fluttering yellow bird, and the blowing of a trumpet, as His Satanic Majesty summoned those who had made a pact with him. Out upon such vileness, I say, and in denunciation of said Tituba I prick this puppet seven times!"

There were seven digs of a pin, and once more a denunciatory echo was heard, as pins punctured puppets with undue force.

"I condemn those judges, Jonathan Corwin, John Hathorne, William Stoughton, and others,"—Margery was the condemner,—"who in arrogant injustice did listen to the testimony of these foolish maidens and condemned to death the aged and innocent. And with them I denounce those ministers of the gospel who, in unrighteous wrath, did aid and abet the verdicts of the unjust. Anathema maranatha, I say, upon them and the evil they wrought."

As the last wailing note died away, each maiden hurled her rag-doll into the pyre, and then, while repeating, "Anathema maranatha!" in denunciatory wail, joined hands with her neighbor and circled about the flames.

Again a sudden stillness reigned and then Rona stepped quietly within the reddish shadows cast by the fire. While gazing into its burning embers she slowly repeated, her dreamy eyes dilated with the fixity of one beholding some mystical scene, "I see a narrow lane before the common jail, where a motley crowd of men, women, and children have gathered from the high-roads and lanes leading from the neighboring towns, all staring with curious and watchful eyes at a long line of musketeers, keeping guard at the door.

"Ah, a murmur surges through the crowd of waiting and expectant people — conversing in awe-stricken tone of the evil doings of the day — as the oaken door of the jail, with its long iron spikes, swings slowly open. Slowly come forth five women; on their faces, pale and haggard, is written the anguish of despair. By their side strides the hard-faced jailer, his ponderous keys clanging at his side. A step behind comes the sheriff, grasping the staff of his office with a firm grip, his face betraying only grim rigidity.

"The crowd parts, and through its center slowly moves the low wooden cart, bearing its burden of five death-stricken women, who, without the consolations of religion, like malefactors, are being hurled to an untimely end, the victims of a grim and hideous delusion. In the rear of the women rushes a wild cavalcade, with loud outcries, hootings, and bitter imprecations against the pale and trembling creatures, who, with calm heroism, bear the vile epithets of the rabble.

"On they sweep towards the place of execution, the crowd pushing and yelling in wild clamor, until a desolate crag — well fitted to be the site of the foul crime to be committed — is reached. As the little cart rolls and bumps to the summit of Gallows Hill, where a solitary tree keeps its ghostly death-watch, the pitiless hangman drags the prisoners from the

cart, roughly pinions their hands behind them, and then blindfolds them. Then, with pompous authority, he orders them to mount the little wooden ladder that rests against the bough of the tree.

"With tottering steps, in the pitiless glare of a noonday sun, the foremost woman climbs the ladder and the fatal noose is adjusted, while the pompous marshal commands silence. Then, in a loud, ringing voice that gives no indication of a merciful heart, he cries, 'In the name of the King!' A sudden snap is heard —" the girl's voice broke, but in a moment she cried, "and another victim had been added to those who died innocent and unavenged in the great tragedy of Gallows Hill."

But now another girl is speaking, as she stands poised with fagot uplifted. "In memory of Bridget Bishop, the first martyr to witchcraft, and in memory of the heroism of Rebecca Nurse, Sarah Wildes, Elizabeth Howe, Susannah Martin, and Sarah Good, all victims of the witchcraft craze, I burn this fagot!" The girl's hand shot up into the air, and the fagot joined its fellows in the burning pyre, while the strains of a mandolin came melodiously through the darkening shadows, as the girls softly chanted Whittier's lines, inscribed on the tomb of Rebecca Nurse:

> "'Oh, Christian Martyr, who for truth could die,
> When all about thee owned the hideous lie!
> The world, redeemed from Superstition's sway,
> Is breathing freer for thy sake to-day.'"

"In August, 1692,"— Mae was speaking,—"the Reverend George Burroughs, John Proctor, George Jacobs, John Willard, and Martha Carrier went to their rest, victims of the grim delusion. I herewith burn this fagot in commemoration of their fortitude and Christian virtues." Again there was a shower of sparks and a sudden blaze while the pathetic verse of the poet was reverently intoned.

"I burn this fagot in memory of those martyred dead who were executed in September, and also in memory of that aged gentleman and heroic martyr,"— Margery's voice vibrated with befitting solemnity, —"Giles Corey, who testified against his wife, and then later, in repentance, refused to plead and was slowly pressed to death." There was a moment's quiet and then, as the girls watched the log catch fire, again their voices swelled out into mournful cadences.

The last words of the line, "is breathing freer for thy sake to-day," had just floated off into silence, when one of the girls gave a shrill scream. As they all turned, for it was something not scheduled on their program, it was to see the Joy Girl cowering back against Rona, with her face covered with her hands as she cried, "Oh! the witches! the witches!"

Rona turned quickly around, and then she, too, covered her face with her hands, for surrounding the circle of girls was something that caused her heart to quake with a sudden strange fear.

CHAPTER XVII

MOTHER HENN, THE FORTUNE-TELLER

YES, the girls were encircled by the most terrible-looking objects that possibly had ever been seen on the fated spot.

Red devils with tails, white-sheeted goblins, queer-looking black figures with horns, strange, uncouth monsters on broomsticks,— nearly all with black or yellow objects on their shoulders,— were swaying and dancing about in mad hilarity. Verily, it was not at all surprising that the little Joy Girl thought that the witches that had been so mercilessly anathematized had come to life, bent on revenge.

As the girls stared, tongue-tied, some with surprise and others with fright, while a few cowered back, like the Joy Girl, with covered eyes, these mad beings, capering about in the glare of the fire, broke into the cry:

"'An' the goblin-uns 'at gits you[1]
Ef you
Don't
Watch
Out.'"

[1] "Little Orphant Annie," by James Whitcomb Riley.

But after a second glance at these witches, Rona's natural good sense come to her aid, and as, in sudden divination as to who they were, she was about to cry out, she heard their yell, "Zing-a-Zing! Bom! Bom!" which left no question as to their identity. The next instant the girls were shrilling, between stifled cries of laughter, "Oh, they're the Boy Scouts!"

Yes, they were the Boy Scouts from the camp at Beverly, who, when they saw they were discovered, recited in sing-song tone:

"'An' all us other children, when the supper things is done,[1]
We sit around the kitchen fire and has the mostest fun
A-listening to the witch tales 'at Annie tells about
An — the gobble-uns —'at gits you
Ef — you
Don't
Watch
Out.'"

By this time the girls, in appreciation of the humor of the surprise, had rushed forward, and, joining hands with the Scouts, were circling with them and singing with such hearty zest that it would have scared anything but mirth and joy to the far ends of the world.

Presently the swaying and singing came to an end, and the merry circlers, breathless and tired, dropped down on the grass. Here, amid a loud hubbub of eager inquiries, the boys explained that the day be-

[1] "Little Orphant Annie," by James Whitcomb Riley.

fore, when the girls had congregated, quite oblivious of their presence, to discuss their plans for the Witch-Circle, the boys, in the little caucus of their own, had vowed vengeance, and hence the result.

"And a very happy ending," Miss Marston interposed, as she and the doctor joined the group seated on the grass. "O dear!" she commented ruefully; "if you girls had kept up that dismal droning of 'O Christian Martyr!' much longer, I think I should have fallen a-weeping on the doctor's shoulder."

"Do not say that," laughed the doctor quickly with twinkling eyes, "or I may be tempted to regret that they did not keep it up."

Miss Marston now sprung a surprise by inviting the Witch-Circle maidens and the would-be-witches to return with her to the hotel for a little dance. Cries of delight greeted this invitation, and in a few moments the young people were crowding into the cars that had been waiting for them under the trees, and were soon speeding back to Salem.

After a dainty little repast, a "witch feast" Peggy designated it, came the dance. Right merrily the couples swung up and down the floor, the girls' cheeks pink with excitement, and the boys' eyes agleam with the enjoyment of the moment, and in admiration of the demure and quaint little maidens in their old-time gowns. With much merriment the boys told how they had rigged up, and displayed their cats made of

yellow and black paper, with goggles fastened on for eyes. The girls declared that they had shown much ingenuity for things planned in so short a time, as their own costumes had taken the left-over moments of several days, and that, too, when they had been partly made at home in preparation for this very event.

As they were merrily chatting, the following morning, discussing the incidents of the evening before — Miss Marston came in and presented Dr. Wayne's compliments, and an invitation from that gentleman to ride to Marblehead to dine at one of the hotels.

Of course the girls were delighted with the idea of a ride and a visit to a place they had heard so many thrilling tales about, and quickly accepted the invitation. Peggy, with spirited exuberance, danced up to the Best Beloved and began to hug her from sheer joy. But suddenly she was lamenting, "O dear! Isn't it too bad Donald isn't here!"

"Indeed it is," acquiesced Rona; while Judith added, "Especially, too, as the doctor is giving us the treat."

"But never mind," broke from Peggy suddenly with a dimpling smile; "he'll be with us in spirit, if not in the flesh. And then, too," she added mysteriously, "we are going to see him very soon, anyway, and then what a joy time we'll have!"

But in answer to the many persistent inquiries as to what she meant, the young lady tripped lightly out of the room, chased by one of the girls, who was determined to make her tell.

On the ride to the old seaport town the doctor pointed out a jutting headland in the bay and said it was here that Endicott had built Derby Fort, and mounted it with cannon from the *Talbot*. The dungeons, or kettles, strange formations caused by the melting of icebergs, were seen in the distance; and also Workhouse Rock, the place where, it is claimed, Jack explained, Skipper Ireson, the saddened hero of Whittier's poem, was transferred to a cart and dragged about the town by the maddened fisherwomen of Marblehead.

> "'Small pity for him! He had sailed away
> From a leaking ship, in Chaleur Bay,—
> Sailed away from a sinking wreck,
> With his own townspeople on her deck.'"

Poco's quotation, an intimation that the unlucky captain deserved his fate, would have started an argument with Jack as to the justness of what had befallen Skipper Ireson, if at that moment some one had not called out, "Oh, we're in Marblehead!" This was sufficient to start Poco again, and as they whizzed on down towards the old part of the town, she began to quote very softly:

"'Not far away we saw the port,[1]
The strange, old-fashioned, silent town,
The lighthouse, the dismantled fort,
The wooden houses, quaint and brown.'"

This little verse immediately set the doctor going, as Peggy was wont to claim, and he told them that although the Puritans had named the "old-fashioned, silent town," it had not been settled by them. "They were induced to call it Marblehead," he concluded, "because its porphyritic rock resembles marble, which they probably believed it to be."

"I have heard," remarked Jack, "that it was settled by people from the Channel Islands, for Huguenot names are not uncommon."

"Undoubtedly they were the original settlers," answered the doctor, "for its inhabitants are true children of the sea. The town has always been called a 'republic of equality,' as its natives are noted for their brusque independence and hardihood. Before the Revolution it was not only one of our great fishing ports, but next to Boston in population and wealth, and it has always been famed for great patriots, soldiers, naval heroes, and sea-kings."

"And pirates and smugglers," suggested Jack.

"Yes," returned the doctor briskly, "as all seaports were, in those days when smuggling was an occupation, and lawlessness reigned. A love of the

[1] "The Fire of Drift-wood." H. W. Longfellow.

sea was inbred, for as soon as a Marblehead boy could handle an oar he was off on the briny deep."

"And those same youngsters," interposed Jack, "if they saw a stranger in town, would pelt him with stones and cry, 'Rock him around the corner!'"

The first object of interest in the old town was the Catholic church, so aptly named "Star of the Sea"; then came the first Episcopal church in America, St. Michael's, whose bell, one of the boys stated, was rung so loudly when the Declaration of Independence was signed, that it cracked. On hearing this the girls immediately made their salute to the great, claiming that it was due to the bell for its patriotism.

As they viewed the "wooden houses, quaint and brown," they were kept busy saluting, for the ancient homes of the old-time great ones in Marblehead are many. The most noted of these was the old Lee mansion, the home of the Revolutionary patriot; the home of Gerry, the signer of the Declaration; and that of Dr. Elisha Story, a Son of Liberty, and the father of the eminent jurist, whose tablet Rona remembered seeing in the Hall of Fame.

As they stood by the Soldiers' Monument Jack told how Captain Mugford, a staunch patriot of Revolutionary days, had sailed away from his bride and shortly after had captured, in Boston harbor, a powder-boat loaded with ammunition belonging to the British. After towing this boat to Boston, while

making for the open sea, his ship grounded, and he was attacked by thirteen boats and two hundred armed seamen from the British fleet. During the conflict that followed Mugford received his death wound, but even then his courage was marvelous, as he cheered his mates on to victory by his dying cry, "Don't give up the ship; you can beat them off!"

A salute was voted the hero, and then the party started for Fort Sewall. As they made their way down by the water-front, among winding streets of cobblestones, and salty wharves, Rona had a good view of gambrel-roofs, hip-roofs, pitch-roofs, in fact, all kinds of dilapidated roofs covering the funny little houses, some mere huts, that stood cornerwise and sidewise on the narrow streets.

Gray and weather-grimed, they had the appearance of having been dumped, hodge-podge fashion, on the rocks by some strange upheaval of nature. A few, escaping from their fellows, had landed on some higher rock or cliff, where they stood grim and stark against the sky, overlooking the labyrinth of ravines and lanes below.

But the grim grayness of this brine-drenched village only brought out more vividly its garden-spots, as one sighted the profusion of gayly flaunting flowers that bloomed luxuriantly in some old dory or in a bucket in the windows of these strange fisher-folk.

The blue glamour from the sea, with its rim of

sun-shadowed rocks, where the swashing of the surf made a lapping melody, all told of the timeliness of two centuries ago, or of weird superstitions and legends, and tales of smuggler, pirate, hero, and patriot.

Fort Sewall proved to be a dismantled, picturesque old fort built prior to the Revolution, with underground dungeons, and surrounded by a public park. After a ramble about the fort the tourists rested on the benches under the trees and reveled in the view of the harbor and the Neck opposite, with its rocks, its summer hotels and villas, whose fluttering flags gave a dash of color to the tree-tops, while the lighthouse at the harbor-mouth added to the charm of the picture.

After idly watching the white-winged yachts, motor-boats, and sea-stained dories darting about on the bay, they listened to the doctor, as he told of the fight, just off Marblehead, between the United States ship *Chesapeake* and the British frigate *Shannon*. How the British colors first struck to General Manly, the capture by Commodore Tucker of over forty war prizes, and the brave deeds of General John Glover, all town heroes, were also told.

But as they were anxious to visit the cottage of Moll Pitcher, the witch, the doctor's tale of naval heroes came to an end, and the party was soon strolling up a narrow street. After a salute to the house of General Azor, who was a one-time patriot, they reached

the little shack where Mary Dimond, the daughter of a fisherman of Marblehead in past days, "read the stars." Afterwards marrying Robert Pitcher, a shoemaker from Lynn, she won fame as Moll, the witch, being a fortune-teller, the predictor of strange events, and the finder of many a pretty romance at the bottom of a china teacup, in her cottage on a lonely crag known as High Rock.

The weirdness that always attaches itself to anything mystical threw its glamour over the girls, and as they stood before this home of Moll Pitcher, Peggy burst out with, "O dear! I do wish we could have our fortunes told by some old witch here in town. Wouldn't it be just too dandy to go back home and tell of our adventure!"

"Perhaps if old Mother Redd was here, you might have had that pleasure," said the Best Beloved, and then she sing-songed:

> "'Old Mammy Redd of Marblehead
> Sweet milk could turn to sour in churn.'"

"Oh, where does she live?" chorused a number of voices as the girls crowded about, while Peggy exclaimed, "Oh, why couldn't we go and have our fortunes told?"

"Well, possibly you could," returned the Best Beloved, smiling, "if you could go back over two hundred years ago, for an old crone by the name of Wil-

mot Redd, or Reed, was said to have been one of the witches hanged at Salem in 1692."

A little later, after making their way through a crooked little lane to an old well, where the romance of Fountain Inn was said to have occurred, it was noticed by some of the girls that, after some mysterious whispering on the part of two or three of the boys, a couple of them had disappeared.

Yes, they had all read about Agnes Surriage, the little scrub-maiden who had married the rich gallant, Sir Harry Franklin. "It was said,"— Judith was the informer,—" that Sir Harry, a young British swell, collector of the port of Boston, arrived one day at Fountain Inn in coach and four, to oversee the repairing of the fortifications of Fort Sewall, and to trail a noted smuggler, who had been pretty active along the coast.

"Of course," continued the girl, "you know that in its day Fountain Inn was not only the favorite resort of the gentry, but it was whispered that smugglers and pirates gathered in its halls. But fortifications and smugglers must have been swept from the mind of the young English baronet when he spied a ragged maid scrubbing the inn stairs. Caught by her pretty face and noting her bare feet,— I presume they must have been pretty, too,"— added Judith —" but, he—" Poco, suddenly reminded, had interrupted her, and with telling emphasis was repeating:

"'Poor Agnes! with her work half done,[1]
They caught her unaware,
As humbly like a praying nun,
She knelt upon the stair.

"'A foot, an ankle, bare and white,
Her girlish shape betrayed,—
Ha! "Nymphs and Graces!" quoth the Knight;
"Look up, my beauteous maid!

"'"Come hither, fair one. Here, my sweet!
Nay, prithee, look not down!
Take this to shoe those little feet,"—
He tossed a silver crown.'"

Poco, being duly encored for her timely little verses, Judith continued her story and told how Sir Harry carried the little scrub-maiden to Boston, educated her and, although he didn't marry her, was said to have treated her like a queen. "It is thought," she went on with heightened color, "that he did not make her his wife because he had just fallen heir to a baronetcy and was afraid that the fisher girl was not high enough up in the social scale to please his family.

"However," continued the reciter of the romance, "some years later, when in Portugal, after being injured by a falling wall, and the little Marblehead maiden had dug him out at the risk of losing her own life, he did marry her, and they were said to have lived happily until his death, which occurred when he was quite a young man."

[1] "Agnes," by Oliver Wendell Holmes.

A visit to Burying Hill was next in order. Here, on a craggy eminence within sound of the sea, all the glories of life ended for hero, pirate, smuggler, sea-king, and patriot, who had flourished in the town in the olden days. After reading a number of inscriptions on the blue-slated tombstones hedged about by tiny fences, and noting the site of the first meeting-house, the girls made the salute before the Seamen's Monument, a tall shaft that towered high upward, in tribute to the sixty-five men and boys who had been wrecked on the Banks of Newfoundland during a memorable gale in 1846. It was a sad reminder of the perils of the treacherous sea, that glimmered below them with demure and placid calmness, as if in mockery of the dead that lie among its tangle of seaweed and rocks, many miles below.

It was not until they reached Peach's Point and were trying to locate the site where the Puritans had built their first fishing-stage, that Margery missed Dan. In answer to her hurried inquiry as to where he had gone, Jack replied that he and Tom had gone down to a cove near, to make arrangements with an old fisherman for a fishing-trip the following day.

Margery greeted Dan with evident relief a few moments later, when the two boys suddenly joined them. But the odd little twinkle in her brother's eyes, and the fact that Tom's sun-burned face was set in a broad grin, mystified her, for she questioned Dan per-

sistently as to what they were up to, but with no result, only that the twinkle and grin deepened.

"Miss Peggy," said Dan a little later, "my friend, the old fisherman, tells me there's a fortune-teller living down on the rocks. She's called Mother Henn, and claims to be a descendant of the renowned Moll Pitcher."

"Oh, do you suppose she would tell our fortunes?" demanded Peggy, in a whirl of excitement.

"Probably," answered Dan, "if you cross her palm with silver." Again came that odd little twinkle into Dan's eyes, which Rona and Judith surmised boded mischief of some kind, but they said nothing; they were not going to spoil Peggy's fun.

Fifteen minutes later they were all standing in front of a fisherman's cabin, perched on top of a jumble of rocks on the beach, where the surf came rushing in masses of feathery spray. There had been some excitement as the girls stepped gingerly over a tiny ladder leading from a crag near the jagged sea-cliff, for fear they would lose their balance and fall into the water below. But they had all managed to cross in safety, after many squeals and exclamations, and finally reached the door of an old gray shack where they met Dan's friend, the old fisherman, who had told him about the fortune-teller. He was a well-seasoned tar, with a rim of gray stubble encircling a red chin, in rubber boots and hat, with the sleeves of

his gray flannel shirt rolled up, as he stood with his arms akimbo and surveyed the group of merry maidens, as they plied him with questions as to the old witch.

But he only smiled cheerily, with a humorous twinkle in his eyes, in reply to their many questions; and, then taking the pipe out of his mouth, jerked his thumb towards the open door hung with a tarpaulin. There was some discussion as to who should enter first, but, as Peggy had been the first to suggest having their fortunes told, she finally marched boldly through the door, with a self-satisfied smile on her face, to think that she had so cleverly achieved her wish.

But when the tarpaulin fell across the door, making the room mysteriously dark and eerie, her blue eyes darkened with sudden fear. In a moment, however, she had regained her poise, as her eyes grew accustomed to the shadowy gloom, and she saw that she was in a real fisherman's hut, with its walls hung with fishing-tackle, a rubber suit, and ornamented with a few cut-out newspaper pictures, with an old dory, made up for a bed, in one corner. On a table near was a solitary candle whose flickering light revealed a half-loaf of bread, a teacup and saucer, and a bag of tobacco.

Near an old sea-chest in an opposite corner of the room, on which stood another dimly burning candle,

sat a strange, uncouth-looking form, evidently Mother Henn, shrouded in a long black cloak with a hood over her head. The girl involuntarily shrank back as she perceived this ghoulish figure and heard it mumbling incoherently in a hoarse, queer-sounding voice, while beckoning with a shaking hand for her to come nearer.

Seating herself on a low bench at the knee of the fortune-teller after laying a quarter on the outstretched palm, Peggy stared half fearfully at the darkish-brown face, lined with wrinkles, from where queer, pale-blue eyes, red-rimmed and bleary, peered at her from under a mop of tangled gray hair, which stuck out from beneath the hood.

Then began a harangue of mumbled words, with a sentence now and then so fiercely enunciated that it came forth with almost a shriek, causing poor Peggy to tremble apprehensively, while she watched her fingers being bent over her palm, their tips studied, her hand doubled at the wrist, and a number of twistings and turnings, and then saw the old witch peer greedily at her palm, as if trying to delve for more gold. Yes, she was to be a bride, to possess unlimited wealth, and, ah! she was to be the mother of fifteen children. Here Peggy uttered a shrill scream, she had not calculated upon such good fortune. A long recital of various things Peggy had done in her young life now followed, which caused the girlish eyes to

widen apprehensively, and then the hand was flung from her as the old crone mumbled, "Next!"

Peggy hurried forth, somewhat pale after her many qualms and quakes; but, when she realized that the ordeal was over, with triumphant glee she told of her good fortune,— no, she didn't mention the fifteen children,— and the mysterious things that had been unfolded in regard to her past life.

The next seeker of fate was Judith. She went reluctantly, as she thought it was all nonsense, but, as she wanted to inspire the others with boldness, hurriedly took her seat before Mother Henn.

As the queer-sounding jumble of words began, Judith lost her indifference and stared directly into the face beneath the hood. Suddenly her eyes grew keen, and, with startled interest, she bent forward and watched the toothless gums that had begun to work about in a most strange and uncanny manner.

"My goodness!" thought the girl. "Is she going to have a fit?" Ah, what was this? For from the mouth of the old hag something suddenly dropped, a brown and gummy thing, landing with a sudden flop into Judith's lap. The girl eyed it for a moment, looked quickly up, and then stared sharply into the pale, light-blue eyes. The next moment she was on her feet with a sudden exclamation.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE GAMBREL-ROOF-HOUSE TEA-PARTY

"HA! Ha! So it's you, Dan? I suspected it," and Judith's laugh rang out merrily.

Dan, for it was the fun-loving young man, slowly rose as he stared in blank amazement at Judith. Before he could answer, however, the girls, who had heard the peal of laughter, had pushed aside the old tarpaulin and were rushing into the room in eager curiosity to see what it all meant.

One look at the boy's rueful countenance, as he stood trying to untangle himself from the long cloak, told the story. Instantly he was surrounded, his hood pulled back, his wig jerked off, and a general tearing to pieces took place, as the girls, in grim determination, attempted to see how he had disguised himself so cleverly.

"By Jiminy! I could have fooled the whole bunch of you," he lamented disgustedly, "if it hadn't been for that old chewing-gum. The old stuff wouldn't stay in my mouth, and I had nothing else to cover my teeth." Then, with a sudden laugh, he jeered exultantly; "Great guns! But I put it over Miss Peggy

all right. Ha! Ha! Miss Peggy, do you want your fortune told again?" he queried, turning to that young lady a jubilant countenance; but *she* had nothing to say.

As the sun was beginning to drop in the west Dan hurried the girls out of the cabin, so he could divest himself of the witch's garb and be presentable again. "Of course," he bemoaned lugubriously, "I could have made a go of it if I had had the fixings, but all I had was that old cloak Sam Pedrick borrowed for me from a fisherman's wife, and a mess of paint with which he had been caulking the seams of his boat."

After dinner at the New Fountain Inn there was a memorable sail around the bay and along the North Shore in the boys' motor-boat. Gun Rock, a deep chasm between craggy cliffs where the sea dashed its white foam in turbulent fury, sending forth a reverberating roar, like the booming of some titanic gun, was eagerly viewed in the hush of twilight.

There was a weird fascination for Rona, as the boat, with its ceaseless chug-chug, glided smoothly into one cove and out of another, to watch the moon arise like a mermaid from her throne of sea-foam, and spread a gossamer of moonshine over the waters.

They would pass a big yacht looming strangely still from the calm of the gray waters, with only a single light at its prow, gleaming like some lone star in the dark, or would glide so close to some pleasure craft

that they could hear the light laughter and happy voices of the party on board.

But perhaps the best of all were the legends told by the boys,— the long-remembered one being that of "The Shrieking Woman," which had for a heroine a poor unfortunate creature who, when a Spanish ship was captured in the days of such adventures, when every one was cruelly butchered on board, was carried ashore. Here, near a place called Oakum Bay, she met her end. Her cries of "O Lord, save me! Mercy!" were distinctly heard by many of the fisherfolk in the stillness of the night. It is claimed that, notwithstanding that almost a hundred and fifty years have elapsed since the dastardly crime, the heartrending shrieks of the woman can still be heard upon the anniversary of the murder.

The adventures of Philip Ashton proved as good as one of Stevenson's tales, some of the party declared, as they listened to how the young lad was stolen by pirates from a strange brigantine and made to serve its master. The youth managed after a time to escape to a desert island, where he lived solitary and alone with wild parrots and birds as his only companions. After many unique experiences with the inhabitants of the other islands, and with men who, like himself, had been wrecked, Philip eventually succeeded in getting on board a ship bound for Salem.

The morning succeeding their jaunt to Marblehead

was spent at the Essex Institute, where the crane that used to hang in the house in which Hawthorne was born — they had paid their respects to his several Salem homes a few days before — and the desk on which he asserted he had written the " Scarlet Letter " were eagerly viewed; also the old print which told about the law the author had rendered so famous in that noted book.

In this repository of historical documents, works of art, and numerous antiquated articles of furniture and clothing, Governor Endicott, Simon Bradstreet, and many other worthies of the Puritan time,— done in placque, miniature, or portrait, were duly saluted.

But the thing that photographed themselves upon their subconsciousness with clear-cut sharpness was Governor Endicott's sun-dial, an antiquated sampler wrought by his wife, Ann Gower, the christening blanket of their old friend, Governor Bradford, the table used by Moll Pitcher when telling fortunes, and the original " Old Glory " used by Captain Driver.

The girls found time as they were hurrying out of the Institute to have a few minutes' chat with the young lady custodian, who, to Rona's and Judith's surprise, proved to be the young girl they had met in the drug-store when searching for Margaret Doane, and who had directed them to her house. She had heard about the Gambrel-Roof-House Tea-Party, she smilingly admitted, to be given by Mrs. Wyeth that

evening, and not only wished them a most "antiquated time," as she called it, but rendered considerable aid by her suggestions as to their several costumes.

Several hours later the American Footsteppers were high up in air on a gambrel-roof, listening to "ye ringing of ye towne clock at ye hour of eight," and gazing about them with curious eyes. The lower part of the gambrel-roof, in a line with the low white railing that enclosed it, had been boarded and covered with rag-carpet rugs, while to the posts logs had been fastened and garnished with greens and old-time posies. From these blazed many lights, throwing a yellowish flare as the flames swayed and curled in the night air.

The huge brick chimney, by some magic contrivance, had been made to simulate an open fire-place, with its usual adornment of pot-hook, hanging crane, warming-pans, and skillets. Above, a mantel had been hung, on which had been placed snuffers, a tinder-box, a Betty-lamp, and a row of green-colored candles, set in candle-sticks and exhaling the balmy fragrance of the bayberry.

Here and there a rush-bottomed chair, a tall clock, or various odd bits of antique furniture, rich in their associations of grandmother's day, gave a timely atmosphere to the scene.

Seated at small tea-tables were several would-be

dames of the early days, silver-curled and sweet-faced, each drinking tea from a dainty china cup and saucer which she had brought with her, as was the custom in those olden times. Some, with knitting bags on arms, gossiped in friendly converse as they clicked their knitting needles in unison with their nods.

For a moment the girls felt as if they had stepped back a century or so, and were really living in the old-time days they had been so anxious to learn about. But the group of quaintly attired maidens had been sighted, and presently Dame Wyeth, their hostess, appeared. Truly she was a veritable picture in her beflowered gown, white wig with its lace cap, and a monstrous feather fan which she fluttered gracefully.

"Greetings to thee, little kinswoman," cried the dame with a dipping curtsy, "It beseemeth me that thou art most fetching in thy sweet simplicity. Prithee, to whom am I indebted for this charming impersonation?"

"Madame Audrey Page, of Gambrel-Roof-House fame, presents greetings and hopes you are enjoying good health," retorted Rona, with as low a curtsy as the one given,— she had been practising it for days, — quickly falling into the whimsical mood and quaint phrasing of her hostess.

"Well chosen, little kinswoman. I bend again to that blithe and wilful wife, who taught me that a cup of tea on a roof-top has twice the value of one par-

taken beneath it. But where is the other little maid," inquired Dame Wyeth, "who waited upon me so prettily the fortunate day of your call?"

But Judith, in farthingale, stomacher, and towering headgear, was already bowing before their hostess with stately grace as she cried, "Of a truth, Dame Wyeth, I am right pleased to meet thee again, and I hope I find thee in good health."

It was well said, but the dame had raised her pince-nez and was eyeing with some curiosity the numerous placards that were pinned to the frills and furbelows of the ancient maiden,—"The Four Ages of Man," "A Love Letter to her Husband," "Meditations Divine and Moral," and "Contemplations." The pince-nez dropped as Dame Wyeth exclaimed, "Bless me, fair mistress, but you are well stamped with that which savors of much wit and profound learning. But to whom are all of these titles addressed?"

"To the public," announced Judith boldly, with another low curtsy, "titles to my book of poems, by Anne Bradstreet, your humble servant, the first American poetess."

"In sober verity," ejaculated the astonished lady, "I am much honored to have so learned and noted a dame beneath — or on top of — my roof." And then she turned and viewed the row of maidens who stood with prim formality, each one awaiting her turn to be presented.

Rona now led forward Betty, who, in a simple white gown, with a wreath of pale-hued roses encircling her hair, bowed low as she softly repeated:

"'There are maidens discreet,
And saintliest matrons; but none is so sweet
As the delicate blush-rose from Lincoln's old hall
The Lady Arbella, the flower of them all.'"

The little Joy Girl now stepped to the fore, her Celtic blue eyes black with radiant happiness, as she curtsied low and with quaint precision intoned:

"'Lorea Standish is my name.
Lord guide my heart that I may do thy will.
Also fill my hands with such convenient skill
As will conduce to Virtue void of shame
And I will give the glory to Thy Name.'"

There was something so pathetically sweet about the gray-gowned little maiden as she precisely held up her carefully designed sampler with its alphabet, and its pastoral scenes, time-worn, but still vivid in coloring, that the dame's eyes filled as they lingered on the simple earnestness of the young face.

Peggy bowed her salutation with due grace as the sprightly Mary Chilton. She looked most bewitching in her Puritan cap and gown, the latter decorated with a number of post-cards of the famed Rock and Plymouth.

Margery made a seemly young matron, the first bride of Plymouth colony, Susannah White, while

Poco was duly severe and learned, appearing as the first club-woman in America, Ann Hutchinson. The fair and gentle Margaret Winthrop, the first lady of the land as the governor's wife, was impersonated by the Best Beloved. Isadore appeared as the Quaker maiden, Cassandra Southwick, while Mae was excellently gotten up as Moll Pitcher, the witch.

Dame Wyeth, anxious that her guests should be royally entertained, now led them to a bevy of maidens whom she presented as the Daughters of Liberty. They were grouped about old hand-looms, some holding yarn, others knitting industriously, while others again were sipping tea from dainty china cups served by old-time gallants.

Rona felt somewhat shy in the presence of these maidens with their gay cavaliers, in slashed doublet and plumed hat, intermingled with the close-cropped head of the more somber-garbed Puritan, but she held her own and bowed quaintly as these imposing personages were presented to her.

She was inwardly wondering why the industrious representations of earlier centuries should bear such a high-sounding title as Daughters of Liberty, when Dame Wyeth cried, " Madame Page, it gives me great pleasure to make you known to Governor John Winthrop."

With a sweeping dip, Rona glanced up to see a black doublet from which hung a number of white

cards. But she immediately perceived that the brown eyes that glowered down at her from over the high ruff and pointed beard did not belong to the "stern John Winthrop."

A little laugh escaped the girl, but before she could make known that this dignified impersonation of that very estimable Puritan was no other than Jack Hinton, she heard a suppressed giggle. She turned to see Peggy making a most elaborate curtsy before an austere individual in a skull-cap, with a goatee, and with a flag pinned on his doublet, evidently meant for the flag of England, but minus the red cross. His face was set in lines of rigid severity as he glowered down at the irrepressible maiden, as she repeated with inimitable drollery, "I am pleased to meet thee, Mr. Daniel Heath!"

But Rona had turned and was crying merrily: "O dear! How funny you do look, Mr. Hinton, in that white ruff and long beard. No," she continued in answer to a sudden stiffening of his face and form, "You needn't glower at me so dismally, for it does not make you look one bit more like a stern old Puritan."

Jack's austerity under this bombardment of recognition wilted, and he smiled down at the merry little maid with rather a sheepish grin.

"But who drew those ships for you?" she inquired as she fingered the cards hanging from his coat,—

miniature drawings of a ship which bore the name in big black letters, "The Flag-ship *Arbella.*"

"Tommy boy," replied Jack. "He is quite an artist, you know. He copied the design from an old print we saw in the Peabody Museum."

But by this time the girls were surrounded by a number of the two-century-old beaux, who, with much laughter and jest from the girls, were presented as Myles Standish,— our red-headed friend Tommy,— the dignified William Bradford, John Alden, Simon Bradstreet, Roger Conant, and a host of notable Pilgrims and Puritans, each one sustaining his part with as much decorum and sobriety as the girls' banter would permit.

At this moment the sound of singing came to their ears, and then a company of Indians, who were carrying simulated chests of tea on their shoulders, was seen coming across the roof. They were headed by Benjamin Franklin, John Hancock, "Old Put," and others, all singing loudly, if somewhat out of tune,

> "'Rally, Mohawks! bring out your axes,
> And tell King George we'll pay no taxes
> On his foreign tea;
> His threats are vain, and vain to think
> To force our girls and wives to drink
> His vile Bohea.'"

This unexpected demonstration delighted the Liberty maidens, and they all clapped with much gusto, to

the amazement of the girls, as they did not understand what it all meant.

But the boys, who had been let into the secret surrounding the newcomers, explained that they represented the patriots, who, disguised as Indians, had dropped overboard the hated chests of tea on the night of the memorable Boston Tea-Party. The song they were singing, Jack explained, was one that used to be sung at the Green Dragon, a noted hostelry in Boston during the Revolution, where not only statesmen and patriots met in secret conclave, but many other notables.

As the group of Indians joined the Liberty maidens, tea flowed liberally, which somewhat astonished the girls, as they supposed there was a ban on tea in the times represented. But one of the Liberty maidens said that they were not drinking real tea, but a concoction made of sage, loosestrife, raspberry leaves, or some such herb. It was called liberty tea, as in those days, when tea was forsworn, these herbs took its place.

But, to Rona's surprise, while she was talking to this representative of Freedom, she discovered that it was the young lady they had met at the Institute. The secret of her quizzical smile when talking about the tea-party was explained. She proved quite a valuable acquisition to their group, for she told them how the Liberty maidens represented the first patriotic organ-

ization founded in America, in Providence, in 1766, by seventeen young ladies.

"They met at the house of Deacon Bowen," she said, "and not only worked all day at knitting and making homespun garments, but they disdained to confer with any of their gallants who had refused to subscribe to the same vow as themselves."

The tea-drinkers were having a very merry time when the sound of a fiddle was heard. "Oh, are we going to have a dance?" was the cry now heard. And then some one began to clear the roof of its coverings, and in a few moments cup-and-saucer dames, old-time maidens, Liberty Daughters, as well as Pilgrim and Puritan gallants, were all spinning around in a Virginia Reel.

Rona had dipped in graceful curtsy in the slow and stately measure of the minuet with several of the Salem notables, and had then been spun around like a top by some of her Scout friends, until, tired and weary, she begged Jack, her cavalier for the nonce, to get her something cooling to drink.

As Jack departed, Rona, fearful that one of the boys would see her and urge her to join the merry dancers again, slipped quickly behind a screen. Seating herself on the low railing of the roof, she fanned herself vigorously, while gazing up at the moon that looked red and golden, slowly climbing upward with a fleet of tiny white ships floating in its rear.

The girl sighed. Yes, she was having a perfectly splendid time, for, as her Institute friend had said, she had an ideal hostess. And yet, under all the gayety there was an undercurrent of sadness in her heart, as she realized that, after all, Mrs. Wyeth had not helped her one particle in solving the mystery that surrounded her parents. Oh, she would be so glad when she reached Boston, where she would be able to hunt up the Doane book. And yet, would it give her any clew if she found it?

The girl uttered a sharp exclamation as she suddenly perceived that she had caught her sleeve in the gold chain that was around her neck, from which was suspended her tiny gold ring. She gave the lace a twist, then a wrench. Oh! she had wrenched the ring off! The next moment it had slipped from her grasp and was rolling over the roof in the direction of the edge!

For a moment she stared with fixed eyes at the little glittering circlet that was wheeling so rapidly over the gray shingles. Then a sigh of relief escaped her, for it had come to a stop against the edge of one of the dormer-windows, that thrust itself outward from the sloping roof.

What should she do? Oh, she could not lose it, for that would mean that she could never identify herself with any one! She gazed helplessly at the glittering speck a moment, and then her eyes brightened. She

glanced quickly around. Not a soul was in sight, for she was safely hidden behind the screen.

The next second a daintily shod foot was swung over the low railing, quickly followed by another. Ah! With taut breath the girl was stepping cautiously towards the shining object — just a few feet ahead of her. One more step. Oh, she must be careful, or she would slip. She glanced fearfully at the black line where the lower roof melted into space. No, there was nothing to prevent her falling over the edge, for this lower roof had no railing like the higher one.

A joyful little sound escaped her. Ah, she had it! With a glad sigh she caught up the ring, and then, to make sure that it would not slip from her fingers again, she dropped it down beneath the laces fastened over her breast. Now she would go back.

She swung around, but alas! her high heel had skidded,— she could feel it slipping. She tottered a second, and the next was lying face downward on the roof, slipping quickly downward! Oh, what should she do? There would be nothing to stop her fall! She would go over the edge! She threw out her hand to grasp the ledge of the window, and found that it was just beyond her reach! She tried to clutch the shingles, but they were wet and slippery. Rona gave a low moan. She could not stop herself,— she was slipping off the roof!

CHAPTER XIX

THE CADET BUTTON

SUDDENLY, through the agonized terror that held Rona in thrall, beat the cry, "Turn over! Quick! It will stop your sliding! I'll be there in a moment!"

The voice sounded strange, dim, and far-away, but the words cut sharply into the girl's dulled consciousness, and she struggled to obey. Then a hand clutched her, and the strange, dim, far-away voice shouted in her ear, "Brave girl, you're all right! Now we'll —" But Rona, at the sudden reaction from the horror that had yawned at her so appallingly, had lost consciousness.

But a moment later she was aware that some one was holding her securely, while dragging her upward over the shingles. "Oh, if you could — only — get me — to the window!" she panted brokenly.

"That's what I'm aiming for. Ah! here we are!" This was said with a quick intonation of relief, and the next moment the girl was lifted up and pushed against the low wall of the dormer-window. She looked up with dazed, blurry eyes at her rescuer, and

then her head dropped as she again felt herself slipping — slipping —

"Now see here, little girl, you're all right." The man's voice was cold and sharp, as a firm hand shook her roughly. "Don't faint! Ah — there!" There was another shake of her shoulder as the voice continued: "Keep your head. If you don't, I'll drop you over the ledge. We don't want any fainting girls around here, *now*."

Rona braced up. "There, that's better! You'll have to get some color into those white lips. By Jove! If a girl only knew what a fright she looked when she fainted — silly thing — why —"

"I'm not — going to — faint!" Rona's voice was as hard as the man's. "I — never fainted — in my — life!" she gulped. But, oh, was she going to cry? She drew in her breath convulsively. But her rescuer wasn't going to let her do that either, evidently, for he suddenly bent forward and touched her hand with the cigarette he held between his fingers.

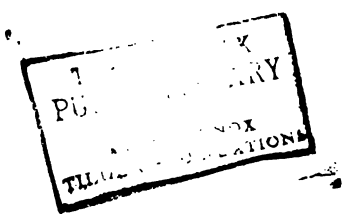
Rona stared with big, frightened eyes. What was he going to do? A stinging, burning sensation on her hand, and then the cigarette was snatched away and there came another of those odd, nervous little laughs.

"Rough treatment, isn't it? But you must keep your grit if you want me to get you off this roof."

"Oh, I'm — all right — now," she said, unconsciously rubbing her singed hand. Then a merry peal



SOME ONE WAS HOLDING HER SECURELY.—*Page 309.*



of laughter suddenly rang out as she cried, "Oh, how funny you look!" For in a sudden glance she saw that the man's powdered wig had been shoved awry, and that an escaped lock of black hair was standing at right angles to the whiteness of the wig, while a smudge of black smeared his face.

"Good! Laugh as much as you like, only keep your nerve," was the cool rejoinder. But Rona was staring again at the man with intent eyes. "Why — oh, you are Sir Harry Franklin, aren't you? I remember, you had the picture of Agnes Surriage pinned to your coat,— but it is gone!"

"No great matter, for I have stood for that jackanapes long enough," was the once Sir Harry's cool reply, as he threw away his cigarette, pulled off his wig and stuffed it in his pocket. "But come," he added, "let us make tracks for that railing! Can you stand now? How would it do if I took off those high-heeled slippers of yours, and let you crawl up in your stocking-feet? You'll be more sure-footed."

And this was how it happened that a few moments later, Rona, clutching her cavalier with one hand, and her slippers with the other, was suddenly brought face to face with Jack Hinton, who, an instant before, had pushed the screen aside, to stare with wild, anxious eyes over the roof.

"Great guns, Miss Rona!" he exclaimed in surprised astonishment, as he peered into the girl's white

face, " where did you disappear to? I have searched the place for you! "

Rona giggled hysterically, and then, remembering that singed hand, straightened up with sudden dignity. While she was attempting to explain, the two men helped her over the railing. But Jack seemed dull of comprehension, and she was forced to enter into details. At last, however, the matter was made clear to him, and then, with a sudden qualm of dismay, she realized that she had not thanked the gentleman who had rescued her from her perilous position. She swung about, but he had disappeared.

In an agony of contrition she sent Jack to look for him, while she pulled on her slippers. But this young man, who had already notified her friends that the girl was missing, evidently thought it more important that they should know that she had been found and was all right. In a moment he rushed up with Miss Marston and a blanketed Indian, whom, to Rona's surprise, proved to be the doctor.

Yes, that dignified, elderly gentleman, always immaculate in his gray business suit, with a shining shirt-front and a well-turned tie, was one of the boisterous Indians of tea fame, who had been so loudly singing the Green Dragon song.

" Yes, she is all right," this gentleman asserted, as he looked her over. " She has had a scare; that is all." But it proved a scare that kept Rona awake more than

half the night, as she again lived over the horrible sensation of slipping down the roof. But she fell into a doze before morning with the happy thought, "Oh, I'm so glad I'm going to Boston, and can look up the Doane book!"

The last few hours of the girls' stay in Salem proved very busy ones, as they all had to go and make a party call on Mrs. Wyeth, which resulted in an invitation for Rona and Judith to visit her next summer; and then there were the boys to say good-by to. This meant mutual pledges of meeting another summer, if possible, if not before, and writing, as Rona laughingly teased Dan at parting, "a letter every day."

On the train to Boston Judith told how Winthrop and his little company of Puritans, after a short stay at Salem, succeeded in locating a site for the capital town, so that by July they were all settled at Charlestown. "Endicott had already established a settlement here," said Judith, "in anticipation of the coming of the governor, for whom the settlers had built a 'greate frame house.'"

The newcomers, about fifteen hundred, settled on the brow of the hill, now Charlestown City Square; but they soon found not only the water from a near-by spring brackish, but that the settlers already there were in a sad state of distress from sickness and lack of food, for they were still living in temporary tents or huts.

"Among these settlers," continued the History Lady, "was one Samuel Maverick, who lived on the Mystic River, and a blacksmith by the name of Walford, who lived in a palisaded house in Chelsea. Then, too, there was the Episcopal clergyman on Beacon Hill, known as the 'Solitary of Shawmut,' William Blackstone.

"The *Lyon,* one of the ships of the fleet, was immediately dispatched to Ireland for food, while the sick ones were cared for by Dr. Fuller from Plymouth. But, notwithstanding his help, two hundred of the settlers died, among them Sir Isaac Johnston. I think you know that the lovely Lady Arbella had died at Salem.

"Things were in this desperate condition," pursued Judith, "when Blackstone came over from Beacon Hill, across the Charles River, and —"

"Why, I thought Beacon Hill was in Charlestown!" exclaimed one of the girls.

"No, it was opposite Charlestown, and was one of the three original hills of Boston, and was on a point of land extending from the mainland, and connected with it by a neck. On the highest point of this hill, one hundred and thirty-eight feet high, the old recluse lived all by himself in a cottage with a rose garden near an orchard, and not far from a spring that was delightfully clear and sparkling.

"Blackstone invited Winthrop and the settlers to come over and settle on his mountain. The invitation was accepted and this was the beginning of Boston. A few of the settlers, however, fearing an invasion by the French, dispersed, and settled in various localities; one went to Dorchester, another to Watertown, while Simon Bradstreet, with the poetess Anne, made the beginning of Cambridge, then called New Towne. The first woman to step ashore," went on Judith, "when the ship brought the company over from Charlestown was Ann Pollard. She —"

"Yes," interrupted Dr. Wayne, who sat near, conversing with Miss Marston, and who had overheard Judith's remark; "if you will go to the Massachusetts Historical Society rooms, you'll see a portrait of that buxom girl, taken when she was an old lady over a hundred years old, it is claimed."

"In October the colonists held the first General Court in America. To be sure they were just about starving, for all their food was gone. I have read somewhere," said the girl, "that Governor Winthrop — I presume that means Madam Winthrop — had just put the last loaf of bread in the oven when a ship was sighted. It proved to be the *Lyon*, loaded with food. Governor Winthrop ordered a fast-day for —"

"A fast-day!" exclaimed Peggy commiseratingly. "Poor creatures, to have to have a fast-day when they

had been doing nothing but fast for months and months."

"Well, they didn't have it," laughed Judith, "for the governor immediately ordered a general Thanksgiving day instead — oh, the conductor is calling out Boston!"

Yes, they were now in Boston, and after repairing to a small hotel, and reading their mail, they found that their plans for their stay were upset by the news that Judith's mother was ill.

"I shall have to return home immediately," said the girl, with worried eyes. "No, she is not seriously ill, father writes, but, as my sisters are away, he wants me to be with her while he is at the office. I shall leave only a few days ahead of you girls, that is all," she added cheerily.

"Oh, I'm so sorry your mother is ill," cried Rona sympathizingly, "and I know how you feel. I should want to fly to her if she belonged to me. But, Judith," she added, "I wanted you to go with me to hunt up the Doane book. Ah, here's a letter from Mr. Hillis!"

She tore open the envelope, glanced quickly over the pages, and then, with suppressed excitement, cried: "Oh, Judith, Isadore's mother is here — in New York! Mr. Hillis says for Isadore to come immediately — her mother is just wild —" But Rona had suddenly spied the Belgian girl coming down the corridor. She turned quickly and flew towards her.

"Oh, Isadore!" she cried. "Didn't you get any letters?" Rona was sparring for time, but there was such a glad note in her voice that Isadore's face brightened.

"No," she said sadly, "I do not get the letters like you happy American girls, for Miss Hector has poor eyesight and likes not to write." But Isadore had caught a sudden expression in Rona's eyes, and, grabbing the girl by the arm, cried, "Oh, Rona, you have news for me! Tell me! tell me! What —"

"Yes," laughed Rona, her joy at the happiness coming to her friend bubbling up in her voice; "yes, Isadore, your mother is in New York! Oh, I am so happy for you! I am so happy for you!"

By this time the girls' outcries had drawn their companions to them, where, upon learning the good news that had come to the refugee, they congratulated her most heartily. In a few moments of rapid planning it was voted that the two girls, Judith and Isadore, start immediately for New York. The Belgian, on learning this decision, became so deliriously happy that she was bewildered, and ran about like one mad, Peggy declared laughingly.

And then this young lady held up a small white box before the eyes of the girls, and demanded that they guess what was in it. "Of course, you know," she added, "it came by mail."

"Oh, hurry, Peggy, and show us what it is," cried

Mae, "for I know you are bursting with something good to tell."

"Indeed, I'm not," replied Peggy coolly; "for if I had been, there would have been no Peggy, for I was the first one to get my mail. But see, honey girls!" There was triumphant glee in her voice as she opened the mysterious box and a second later displayed a small glittering object on her palm.

"Oh, it's a cadet button!" declared Poco, who was standing by the side of her friend. "And — why, of course, it came from Donald," she added in an assured tone.

"Yes," answered Peggy, "it is a cadet button, and it came from Donald. But see here, girls, I have dandy news for you, and that is, that we are all invited to a hop at West Point on the last Saturday in July. Oh, isn't that just high cockalorum! And I knew about it all the time," she added triumphantly, "but kept it a secret until the invitation came."

This was indeed news of great joy, and the girls went almost as wild as Peggy, who was twirling up and down the corridor in a hula-hula dance, as they called her sudden overflows of delighted jubilation. She finally quieted down, to discuss the coming event. In the midst of their plans as to what they would wear to the hop, what train they would take to the city, and so on, so as to stay one night there before leaving for the Point, one of the girls, happening to

see Peggy trying to pin the cadet button to her gown, suggested that she have a pin made of it.

"O dear! I wish he had sent one to me," lamented Poco, "for I want one to add to my collection of souvenirs."

"Oh, well, Poco, if you had coaxed hard enough you would have received one probably." Mae was the speaker.

Like a flash Peggy turned on her, crying, "I presume you meant that for me!" The girl's eyes were flames of fire, and her face had whitened ominously.

"Oh, Peggy, don't mind her," pleaded Rona gently, as she pulled at the girl's sleeve, for she was reminded that, like all generally good-natured people, when once aroused, Peggy was a live ember. But the girl was too white-heated to hear this gentle admonition, as she faced Mae in a blaze of fury.

"I didn't say you begged for it," retorted Mae; "but I presume you asked for it."

"If I remember correctly, Miss Mae Allyn," Peggy's voice was cool and steady, although her eyes flamed, "several of the girls — headed by you — asked Mr. Donald Wayne for a button. It was the day we were in Pilgrim Hall when I told that he was a cadet at West Point."

"Yes, Mae," broke in Margery, "and Donald said if he was to give a button to every girl who asked him, his uniform would be shorn of its glory."

"Your memory is better than Mae's, Margery," said Peggy, a little smile of satisfaction curving her lips. "Well, please to remember, girls, that I did *not* take part in that button clamor,"— she drew herself up to her full stature,—"for my mother taught me never to ask a favor from a boy, and I never have done so. Mother said that if a boy wanted to do a good turn for a girl, it would not be necessary to ask him. In proof thereof," continued the girl,— Peggy was always very dignified and correct in her language when angry,—"when we turned away from you girls, Mr. Wayne asked me if I would like to have a button. I told him I would be delighted, but he must understand that I had not asked for it. This was agreed to, and — here's my voucher for the agreement." And Peggy again held up the button between her thumb and forefinger.

"Well, I don't see what use there is in making such a fuss over the old thing, anyway," jerked out Mae, determined not to be worsted; "and then, any one can get one by buying an old army, or policeman's uniform from the old-clothes man."

Like a whirlwind Peggy had swung about again, but a chorus of "Oh, Mae, how can you be so mean?" brought her to a halt, while Rona, who hated to have unkind words when so much happiness was in the air, slipped to Mae's side. "Oh, Mae," she admonished,

slipping her arm around that young lady, "you know how angry you would feel if Peggy had made that remark to you,— if you had been the one who had received the button." Then she whispered, as she saw a yielding expression pass over the girl's face, "Quick, Mae, tell her you are sorry, for really you ought to."

Mae's lips curled, and she was about to walk away with a "Well, I don't care!" when she caught sight of Rona's face. Perhaps it was something she saw in her eye, or that she was better-hearted than she appeared at times to be, for she suddenly dropped her defiant attitude and rushed up to Peggy, crying: "Say, Peg, old girl, I really didn't mean what I said. I just wanted to tease you, for you know, Peg, you are gloriously high and mighty when you get in a whirl." She glanced half beseechingly at Peggy, for, after all the sparring between the girls, they were at times the best of friends, each, in a way, admiring some particular quality the other possessed.

The girls all felt very "weepy," as Peggy expressed it, when they gathered in the station to say good-by to the two who were bound for New York. But when they remembered that they were all to meet the first of the week at the Grand Central, en route for West Point, the atmosphere was soon cleared of sorrow and woe.

As they returned to the hotel Peggy suggested that

they have a kimono party,— something of frequent occurrence,— and, while resting, finish making their arrangements for the sightseeing of the morrow.

Rona pleaded an excuse, for she was determined to hurry to the Public Library with Betty, who had begged to be allowed to accompany her. So the two girls, after making inquiries at the office as to how far the library was from the hotel, sallied forth on their errand.

CHAPTER XX

A STRANGE DISCOVERY

RONA was lying very still in a darkened room, with Betty seated near the bed, moving a big palm-leaf fan slowly to and fro. "Rona, dear," caressingly whispered the girl, "do you feel any better?"

But the motionless figure did not answer, and Betty, with her usually smooth brow crinkled into an anxious frown, laid the fan softly down and tip-toed cautiously from the room. She had gone but a step or two along the corridor when she met Miss Marston, who, with a small tray in her hand, from which came the cooling clink of ice, was hurrying towards the room the girl had just left.

"Oh, Miss Marston," broke from Betty in distressful tone; "I'm terribly worried. Rona has not said a word for ever so long. I'm so afraid something has happened to — her — for — O dear, I never saw her lie so still before." Betty's head went down on Miss Marston's shoulder. It would probably have landed on the tray if that lady had not quickly swerved it one side.

"It's all right, Betty girl," the lady made answer. "Rona has a bad headache, that is all. I think she is disappointed about something. Perhaps — well, now, you run down on the veranda and tell the girls she's all right,— that's a dear."

Betty, after dabbing vigorously at her eyes with a much bedewed handkerchief, hurried down the corridor, while Miss Marston made her way to Rona's room.

As she entered she heard the girl fling herself restlessly over on the bed. "Are you awake, dear?" she asked gently; "for I have something that will relieve that aching head of yours. And see what the doctor has sent to America's Daughter,— a big bunch of roses, pink ones, too, and you know you are wild over them."

There was no answer for a moment, and then a deep sigh burst on the stillness of the room. "What is it, dear? Does the head ache so badly?" Miss Marston's cool hand brushed aside the heavy masses of hair that almost covered the girl's face, and rested caressingly on her cheeks.

"Oh, no, it is not *that!*" came in a faint voice from Rona, "it is because — Oh, Miss Marston, I could not find anything, no, not the slightest clew in regard to my parents. O dear! Now I'm *so disappointed!*" Then pent-up nature asserted itself, and the girl cried in long convulsive sobs that distressed the Best Beloved as she

endeavored to soothe the tempest she had unwittingly evoked.

"I know how you feel, little America's Daughter," replied the sweet, low voice comfortingly. "But you must try not to feel so badly about it, for surely *some* day at *some* time you will find a clew. But won't you see the girls — they all feel so terribly worried. Peggy's sure you're going to have some kind of a fever, and wants me to telegraph Mr. Hillis. And the Joy Girl — she just wails like a banshee. Poco and Margery wouldn't eat a mouthful of lunch — why, even Mae is as glum as a spook." A long-drawn sob from the recumbent figure was the lady's only answer.

"Come, little America's Daughter, cheer up, I am sure you will get a clew some day."

"Oh, no, I have given up all hope of *that* —" Rona's voice was cold and cheerless. "For I think I am going to get hold of something that will give me a clew, and then it all amounts to nothing. Why, Betty and I hunted in the library until I was so tired I could hardly see. One of the librarians helped us, too,"— there was a suppressed sob in the speaker's throat, "but there is no Doane Book in the Public Library. Now there is no place to look,— all hope is over."

"Don't say that, Rona,— oh, I hate to see you so unhappy!" replied the Best Beloved distressfully. Suddenly a bright light flashed into her eyes. She

hesitated a moment and then cried with happy, gleaming eyes, "Rona, dear, I am very happy just now, and because — I am happy — I want you to share some of my sunshine."

Rona stared at Miss Marston with keen, alert eyes — there was a note in her voice — then something must have told her, for with a glad light on her face she cried, "Oh, Miss Marston, are you going to marry —"

"Oh, don't mention the word, Rona!" Miss Marston's face was scarlet, but her eyes were still shining with that strange light. "It's just a secret as yet. I've only hinted it to you, dear, because, as I said, I want you to share my joy." The Best Beloved bent over the girl and drew her face close to her own.

"I know you won't mention it, Rona, for it is rather unexpected in a way. Oh, yes, there's a bit of the romantic connected with it, and — well, some day later I will tell you all about it. But don't you want to sit up by the window, Rona? It will be much cooler. And won't you let Betty and the Joy Girl come in and do something for you? They are wild to wait on you."

"Yes, let them come in, the dears! But, oh! are those the flowers the doctor sent me? Isn't he just a dear!" Rona paused and hurriedly glanced up at her companion, who was blushing furiously. Then they

both laughed in a happy sort of way that made Rona feel like her old self. "But I do wish," she commented regretfully as she touched the roses softly, "that I could have found just the least bit of a clew." Her eyes filled again. And then in a very timid voice, "But won't you kiss me, *just once,* Miss Marston,— just the way my mother would if she were here?" There was such a yearning in Rona's voice that the Best Beloved gathered her close in her arms as she kissed her again and again.

After Rona had bathed her face and put up her hair and was presentable once more, Betty and the Joy Girl came rushing into the room. Betty's eyes were still red, and the little Celtic maid was on the point of bursting into a wail, one of joy this time, when a knock sounded on the door.

In answer to Rona's "Come in!" a maid entered with a package and some roses and violets artistically bunched together, with a card attached, bearing the words, "Oh, please let us see you. PEGGY." The package was a box of Huyler's chocolates with several cards attached, on each of which was written a cheery message of sympathy from one of the girls, as each one begged to be allowed to see her.

Of course this was too much for Rona's peace of mind, and forthwith Betty was dispatched to tell them all to come up. And then — well — it must have been a very merry and glad meeting if the sounds of mirth

and the noise that was heard by the neighbors on each side of the room were any proof.

The party of sight-seers, now reduced to nine, including Miss Marston and Dr. Wayne, the next morning set forth in automobiles to do Puritan Boston. The first place visited was Hudson's Point,— near the head of the Charles bridge,— the site of the ferry where Winthrop and his little company landed in crossing over from Charlestown to join Blackstone on Trimountain.

From this historic site they hurried to the Massachusetts Historical Society, and soon were standing in a room with high windows, glass cases, and shelves containing rare letters, documents, and other valuable curios, guarded by dingy-looking portraits on the walls of the great ones who had helped to make New England.

As they went eagerly from one stern-browed Puritan sire to another in their search for Ann Pollard, Peggy broke in with the query, "How old is Ann?" Before any one could answer this frivolous conundrum, however, Rona suddenly exclaimed, "Here she is."

It was not necessary to ask how old this venerable Puritan dame was, for her face gave evidence of a century or more of years that had seamed it with deep lines and furrows. The colors of the painting were still fresh and vivid, bringing out into strong contrast the white turned-over collar and the blending shades

of the quaint old gown, as Mistress Ann Pollard, sedate and dignified, sat erect in her chair, holding in her hand the Book of all books, the Bible.

From beneath the tightly-fitting Puritan cap her eyes gleamed bright and alert, giving one no reason to doubt her statement that when a romping girl she was the first woman to step ashore from the shipload of Puritans coming from Charlestown. Certainly no one could question her deposition, made at eighty-one, that the first resident of Boston, the Reverend Mr. Blackstone, who had invited Winthrop and his people to share his land, was a frequent visitor at her cottage, or that it stood where his rose-garden and house had once stood.

The next point of interest was in and around the Old State-House at the head of State Street. Peggy called it holy ground, and declared that the girls ought to walk about the historic old building barefooted, for here once stood the "sawe pitte," where the logs for the first dwellings were prepared by the settlers. The Exchange building stood on the site of the house where Governor Winthrop lived for thirteen years, while a tall sky-scraper near by marked the spot where the first meeting-house, a plain wooden structure with a thatched roof, was erected in 1634.

"The Old State-House is the most historic edifice in Boston," explained the doctor, "as it was erected on the foundations of the first town-house built in

1637, from moneys subscribed by the people, and one Robert Keayne, Captain of the first artillery organization, now the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company. It has been successively Town House, Court House, and City Hall. It was burned down, reërected, and burned again, until finally the present edifice was built."

"I suppose it must have been somewhere around here," ventured Poco, "that the first colonial market was held, the bell being rung at sunrise to tell the people it was market-day."

"Yes, and it was about here, too," nodded the doctor, "that the whipping-post stood, as well as the pillory and stocks. And from here, too, I presume, the bell was rung every night, telling the people to go to bed at ten o'clock, for any one found on the streets after that hour was haled to court."

"It must have been around here, I presume, then," supplemented the Best Beloved, "that the watchman used to parade at night, shaking his rattle to let the sleepers know the hour of the night and the state of the weather."

From the Old State House they whizzed to Copp's Hill burying-ground, one of the two hills remaining of the three giving the name of Trimountain. After a survey of the ancient tombs in the dismantled old cemetery, with its few remaining stately trees,— the spot of special interest being the summit, where the

first windmill had been built to grind the settlers' corn,— they started for the highest and most noted of Boston's triple peaks, Beacon Hill.

As they stood at the side of the new State House, looking with awesomeness, as Peggy expressed it, at the Beacon, a tall marble shaft surmounted by the American eagle, Rona, whose mystic eyes had been quietly gazing upward, suddenly startled the tourists by the outburst, "Oh, the Beacon has faded into the clouds!"

As her companions stared at her in wonderment, thinking she had suddenly become demented, with a smile lurking in her eyes, she cried, as if in answer to their unspoken query, "No, I'm all here, and so are you, girls,"— the smile deepened,—"only we have stepped back a century or two and are standing not before a great golden-domed building, rows of dingy brick houses and high chimneys, but on the Puritans' beacon hill.

"At our feet," she went on, her dreamy eyes wide-staring, "is a grassy patch of green, while sloping meadows clumped with wild roses and bayberry-bushes, where cows are quietly grazing, stretch before us. In the hollows of the low-rounding heights are the settlers' homes, rude little houses of wood, with thatched roofs and big chimneys. Then come the wild marshes, with their straggling creeks and coves nestling by the blue waters of the bay, and the glimmer of the

rivers, and the purple line of the distant hills. Beyond all, far outward, are the tiny wooded islands, floating on shining waters, that seem to beckon to us to come out to the great sea beyond.

"And right in front of us,"— Rona threw up her hands,—" stands the tall pole, with its skillet nailed to a mast at its top and filled with the ominous fire of blazing tar. Ha! the sentry on guard at its foot has discovered a straggling group of savages creeping stealthily through the thinly lined woodland on the outskirts of the low hills. Oh, they have seen the burning barrel! They know it is the signal-fire to alarm the colonists," the girl shaded her eyes, as if gazing off into the distance. " Yes, they have turned tail and are scurrying away to the far-distant hills, their feathered headgear and lithe, agile forms marring the landscape, suggestive of sudden fear, as they dart from tree to tree."

But Rona's sudden flight into the past, carrying her mates with her, was a brief journey. A few seconds later, as the girls were all laughing merrily, their imaginations still vivid from Rona's unique way of portraying an old-time scene, the doctor said that the first beacon, or signal-light, had been erected in 1634. A hundred years later it fell, but was reërected. During the Revolution a fort was built on the site. Later, the hill was leveled and the present obelisk built.

Now that the beacon was disposed of, the cars were

again called into service, and a few minutes later all the members of the party were standing on the corner of Washington and School streets. Here, a number of tall, bleak-looking buildings stared at them dismally, quite unaware, the doctor declared, that they shared with the Old South Church the honor of standing on the site of the home of the greatest man in the Puritan colony, Governor Winthrop.

"But we saw his house, or the site of it, near the Old State-House," insisted one of the girls, with some surprise.

"Yes," returned Dr. Wayne, "but I presume, as the colony increased in population and wealth, that the governor required a larger mansion, and so moved up here on the hill. As the life of this good Puritan is so closely interwoven with the history of the settlement, necessarily his house must have been the scene of many an important event. 'The Green,' as the grounds, or garden, surrounding his mansion was called, extended from Milk Street to Spring Lane, the house being near the lane."

"Oh, I wish we knew more about John Winthrop and his wife, the fair Margaret," lamented Rona; "that is, about their home life."

"You mean his various wives," corrected Peggy alertly.

"Yes, it is unfortunate," replied the doctor, ignoring Miss Peggy's flippancy, "that so little is known

about the home life of these Founders of the Nation. But, in regard to Winthrop, we do know that he was a most lovable character, notwithstanding that he has gained the name of 'stern John Winthrop.'

"He had a most interesting series of romances," went on the doctor. "His first wife was not only very young, very wealthy, but very lovely. He was but eighteen when the knot was tied. But, alas! she soon died, leaving him six children. The object of the gentleman's second heart attack died within the first year of their marriage.

"For his third wife he married Margaret Tyndall, the daughter of a knight, and a most lovely lady, who made him a 'faythfull yoke-fellow.' They had five children, and had been married twelve years when Winthrop came to America, being at the time a man a little over forty years of age.

"Margaret came over a year later, and was received with great joy. She was a woman of most winsome personality, and endured the hardships of pioneer life, and her husband's loss of fortune, with a sweet graciousness that won her many friends. They were indeed true mates, as shown by their love-letters, which fortunately have been saved to us.

"Yes, Miss Peggy," said the doctor earnestly, "if you could read those letters, you would not doubt the genuineness of this old-time romance, for they are replete with virtue, unvarying patience, and a loyalty

on the part of the lady, and sterling sincerity of purpose and devotion on the part of the governor. Upon more than one occasion he wrote 'My love,' 'my joy,' or 'my faithful one.' Another letter was addressed to 'My loving wife.' One, written to Margaret on the fourteenth of February, 1629, begins with, 'Thou must be my valentine.' It is said that these married lovers made a compact which read, 'Mondays and Fridays, at five of the clock of night, we shall meet in spirit till we meet in person.'"

"Yes," laughed Miss Marston, "that compact was all right, but you have forgotten to tell, doctor, that at a later period the good governor said, 'I own with sorrow that much business hath made me too often forget Mondays and Fridays.'"

"You are too exacting," returned the doctor smilingly, "for the poor governor, after all, had as much human nature in his make-up as the rest of mankind."

"Rona," cried one of the girls at this juncture, "give us another picture, one on the Green, this time."

Rona was about to decline to enter into a "vision," as the girls called her picture-portrayals of past times, but a sudden thought caused her to change her mind, for the next moment, with closed eyes, she was saying: "I see a green hill, a sloping meadow, and a bubbling spring, under a tree. Near it stands a man — yes, it is the 'Solitary of Shawmut,'— and his gun — he has been for a tramp over the blue hills yonder — is

resting against the tree, while he quaffs a draught of the sparkling water. Ah, his thirst is quenched, and his eyes are wandering proudly over his garden abud with his dewy-hearted roses, and then on, to his apple orchard, where the pink blossoms are drifting in snow-falls of satiny petals on the ground. And now he has mounted his horse again, and —"

But a well-known voice has broken in upon the "vision" by giving it a more poetical touch, as it softly repeats:

"And hark! the trodden branches crack:[1]
A crow flaps off with startled scream;
A straying woodchuck canters back;
A bittern rises from the stream;
Leaps from his lair a frightened deer;
An otter plunges in the pool;
Here comes old Shawmut's pioneer,
The parson on his brindled bull!"

"Oh, Poco! that came in just right," chorused the girls as the recital ended, and then they had turned and were begging Rona to go on.

"No, I am run dry," laughed that young lady. "Ah, but perhaps you would like to know that the old parson of Shawmut forgot to be so exclusive after a while,— you know they claim he came to the unknown land in order to be by his 'lonesomest self'— But, Peggy, what the doctor said must be true, for William

[1] "Boston Common,—First Picture," by Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Blackstone had his romance late in life, for he married."

"Married?" shrilled the girls.

"Yes, he married, in 1659, a widow lady by the name of Mary Stevenson. I believe she and her husband used to live somewhere hereabouts, when the old parson lived in his rose-garden, for the recluse used to visit them when he was still a lover of solitude."

On being informed by the doctor that Governor Winthrop had died in the house on the Green in 1649, when only sixty, and was buried in the oldest burying-ground of the town, now King's Chapel Burying Ground, there was a rush for the cars.

In a twinkle of space, as Peggy called it, the scene had changed, and they were all standing in a little enclosure hemmed in by the walls of King's Chapel and by high office buildings. Yes, they were in the very heart of the city, a stone's throw from Washington Street, in a somber, grassy patch, where venerable trees cast their shade over moss-grown slabs and time-weathered monuments — fitting reminders that life, even to the greatest, is but a span of time.

To Rona, this old burying-place — for it was here that the very first comers to the colony were interred, with its atmosphere of dreary, sleepy gloom and hushed stillness, in vivid contrast to the hum and stir of life that ebbed and flowed in restless activity on the other side of the iron fence — seemed like the dark shadow

of a tiny leaf on the gold-lit ground of a sunny day.

With deep reverence the salute was made before the tomb of the worthy Governor Winthrop, and his two sons, and other ancient notables in St. Botolph's little town. And then, to their delight, the tomb of Mary Chilton was spied. As they knelt before it and tried to decipher the partly obliterated inscription that told that the *Mayflower* maiden had died as the wife of John Winslow, the brother of the noted statesman, Edward, Poco repeated softly:

"'O ye who round King's Chapel stray,[1]
Forget the turmoil of the street;
Though loftier names are round her lay
A wreath of flowers at Mary's feet!
Though gallant Winslows slumber here,
E'en worthy Lady Andros, too,
Her memory is still as dear,
And poets' praise to Mary due.'"

With curious eyes the little party noted the arms and escutcheons of some noted early governors, and the rows of stone vaults built into the embankment on the sides of the cemetery, where reposed the nameless ones, and those who were not considered worthy to lie in hallowed ground.

"Oh, how unfeeling!" breathed Peggy in indignant tone. Her eyes had misted, as she read the placard telling who were interred in the vaults.

"Never mind," consoled Rona — for she, too, had

[1] "Mary Chilton," by G. B. Griffith.

been thinking — as she passed her arm sympathizingly around her friend, "they are just as happy, poor little unnamed babes, in those vaults as those buried in with the great ones. For God's love and pity, you know," she added softly, "is greater than man's."

There was silence for a moment, and then Rona turned away and walked slowly down a little side-path, her mind still dwelling upon the pathetic little monuments to man's austerity. Suddenly her eyes bulged, caught by something that stared up at her from a row of tiny slabs at her feet.

A step or two, and she was before a low-standing brown slab, pushing aside with trembling fingers the clambering vine that straggled across its face. A second later a startled cry escaped her. She swallowed hard as she stared fixedly at the name on the tomb. Oh, it could not be — she must be dreaming! She bent closer — no, there it was — her own name, Rowena Doane!

CHAPTER XXI

THE JOY GIRL'S ADVENTURE

RONA brushed her hand dazedly across her eyes. Surely she had become so obsessed with thinking about and trailing her parents that the name of Doane had become a haunting phantom of her brain. She heard a step and turned hastily to see Peggy coming towards her. White and limp she beckoned to her hurriedly, and then sank on her knees before the brown, crumbling stone, with her eyes staring steadfastly on its time-blistered face.

"Oh, what is it, Rona?" exclaimed Peggy with a quick glance at the girl's strange attitude. "How white you look!" she continued, as she bent over her. "Are you ill?"

"No,"— the word came in a whisper,—"but I have — thought — so much about — the name of Doane,— Oh, Peggy! I'm terribly afraid —" she gulped "— that I am afflicted — with some kind of hallucination — for I see the — name — of Doane on everything. Why, I see it on this tombstone, or else —" her voice had trailed off into a mere sound. Then, with renewed energy, she leaned forward and pushed

aside the vine, crying, "Can you read — that — name?"

"Rowena Doane! Why, oh, Rona, that is your name!" joyfully breathed Peggy, her blue eyes darkening in surprise. "Why, isn't that the strangest?"

"Oh, do you see it, too?" cried Rona in a shrill voice. She caught her friend by the arm. "Oh, be sure, don't make a mistake! Don't make a mistake!"

"Well, I like that!" retorted Peggy with a show of indignation. "I guess I can read English. The words are plain enough. To be sure, the *R* has lost its hind foot, but the *O* is clear enough, and the *W* is all there. The second *E* looks as if it had gone off on a spree and lost some of its belongings, but the rest of the letters are distinct and plain. Yes, Rona, there's no doubt about it; you haven't become an imbecile, or nutty, as Donald always says, for your name is there as plain as the nose on your face."

"Oh, I'm so glad!" voiced Rona with a relieved sigh, "for, Peggy, I really was beginning to think I had lost a button or two, as Maggie always says when she wants to let people know they are getting queer in their heads."

But Peggy was not interested in old Margaret just at that moment, as she clapped her hands together gleefully, crying delightedly, "Now, Rona, that name proves just what I told you,— that you were born here in America. Yes, and that you are a true

'America's Daughter.'" With this outburst she fell to hugging her companion in unfeigned joy.

Rona's eyes filled with tears, not only that another sign that she had a claim to being American-born had come to light, but at the sudden hope that again flared up in her breast, assuring her that here might be another clew in the tracing of her parents.

Hearing Miss Marston calling them, the two girls hurried and joined the others. After a cursory glance at the exterior of King's Chapel, simply because the original structure was really a monument to Isaac Johnston, who was supposed to have been buried somewhere on the grounds, as it was part of his land where the Chapel and cemetery stood, they started for the Old South Church.

On the way they passed the site of Governor Endicott's Boston house, but it did not interest them as much as the home of old Dame Hibbens, who was hanged for a witch on Boston Common. On one of the girls asking the doctor what she had done to meet with such a sad fate, he replied: "Nothing to deserve the fate of being hung. Like many people, when afflicted, she became cantankerous and made so many bitter remarks about her neighbors that they were only too glad to accuse her of being a witch. The great preacher of the day, John Norton, a few years later, made the remark that they had hanged the poor old

soul ' for a witch for having more wit than her neighbors.' "

In pursuance of their plan to keep to things colonial, the girls found the Old South, which was in reality a Revolutionary landmark, interesting only, as it was built on the site of a little cedar meeting-house erected in 1670, on " the Green," part of Governor Winthrop's land.

As they stood within the church, and heard the story of its erection, the doctor suggested that perhaps it would be interesting to them to know that it was in this church that Margaret Brewster, a " prescribed " Quakeress, had appeared before the congregation one Sunday morning in 1677. " She was clad in sackcloth only, with ashes on her head," he told them, " and was barefooted, with blackened face. She delivered the solemn warning to the people in the church, that a dire calamity, called the black pox, was to come upon them as a punishment for their persistent persecution of the Quakers."

" What did they do to her? " several of the girls inquired in unison.

" She was whipped at the cart's tail, up and down the town, with twenty lashes," answered their informer; " a very sad fate, indeed, to the woman, as, no doubt, she was a good creature, although a little ahead of her day, and a so-called fanatic."

"Was it not in this church that old Judge Sewall, five years after the Salem delusion, recanted?" asked Miss Marston. "Seems to me I have read something of the kind."

"Yes," nodded Dr. Wayne. "It was on a fast-day, a day of humiliation and penitence, when Judge Sewall — he was the judge, girls, who helped to hang the witches at Salem — rose in his pew, and stood with bent head while the pastor read to the solemn assembly his confession of contrition for his share in the slaughter of the martyrs."

As they hurried from the church Dr. Wayne suggested that they follow the path of the Puritan governor as he walked from "the Green" or his mansion on Spring Lane to the Town House. The girls eagerly assented, and in a few moments they were parading with due decorum, as behooved a party whose aims were so high, through the lane, then through Devonshire Street, or, as it was called in Puritan days, Pudding Lane, crossing Water Street and going on to State Street, known as King Street before the Revolution.

By this time they were ready to enter the cars, and after a moment's spin came to a stop in front of what the doctor designated "The Old Corner Bookstore." The girls failed to see what there was interesting in this old place, until Dr. Wayne explained that it was said to be the oldest building in Boston, and was for a

century noted as the meeting-place of eminent men of letters and other notable characters.

"Yes," added Poco, who had been peering at her guide-book, "it also marks the site of the house where lived Anne Hutchinson, known as America's first club-woman."

"Honest to goodness, Poco," wailed Peggy as this fact was announced, "please don't tell us anything about the learned Anne. Why, from the time I was in pinafores," she added, nodding at the doctor, "we have been compelled to write stacks of stuff, and to listen to lengthy discourses about this worthy lady."

"Well, perhaps if you don't want to hear about your friend Anne," laughed the doctor, "possibly you would like to hear about a great friend of hers, the young boy governor, Sir Harry Vane. He did indeed prove a staunch friend to the persecuted lady, for he stood by her to the last.

"He was a most remarkable youth," continued the gentleman, "for like the Marquis de Lafayette, he gave up the gay pleasures of a court life to pursue the high ideals of his young manhood, as he was a champion of liberty. He was very popular in the colonies, being adored by the masses, as he was a firm friend of the Puritans.

"But, notwithstanding the fact that he defended Mrs. Hutchinson with great eloquence at her trial, he was not proof against the adamantine austerity and

bigotry of her judges. The men who condemned Mrs. Hutchinson for her broadness of mind had been forced to leave England for the very thing for which they were condemning her,— the right to individual thinking.

"Vane seems to have lost caste with the authorities on this account, and after his friend's banishment, and his own defeat as a candidate for reëlection, he returned to England. Here he became a prominent leader in the Commonwealth, being a strong supporter of everything that stood for people's rights and liberties.

"But, alas!" remarked the doctor, "when the Restoration placed Charles II on the throne, Vane was arrested on a charge of treason, and, although he was entirely innocent of any participation in the plot against the life of royalty, and defended himself with great ability and dignity, he was beheaded in the year 1662. The blind poet Milton said he was 'young in years but in sage counsel old.'"

The next move in this game of footsteps was to the State-House, "the house set on a hill," as it has been called, with its golden cupola, its double row of colonnades, and its majestic sweep of steps. The girls had passed and repassed it several times, but, in strict adherence to their established rule of taking things in turn, they had not entered.

They were now to have that pleasure, and after sa-

luting the bronze statue of Webster on the right of the entrance, and that of Horace Mann, the great educator, on the left, they entered, and were soon mounting the broad staircase with its beautiful marble steps and its mural paintings.

"It has been claimed," said the doctor, "that this State-House is a memorial to John Hancock. As you girls know, he was the first signer of the Declaration of Independence, and the first governor of Massachusetts after the war. It is also stated that it was built on the site of his pasture, his spacious mansion being just a few steps away, on Beacon Street."

"Why, then," exclaimed Poco in alarmed disgust, "we are breaking our rule, for we were to see only colonial things."

"So you will,— a few at least," returned the Wiseacre with one of his knowing smiles, "for there are a few things ancient even in this house with the golden dome."

The portraits and statues in Doric Hall were now inspected, and the three hundred battle-flags carried by the state volunteers in the Civil War in Memorial Hall, and then they were standing in the Hall of Representatives, laughing merrily at a funny-looking wooden codfish.

"Now here is your Puritan relic," informed the doctor, "for this odd-looking fish is of historic value, as having been used in the Old State-House."

As the girls gazed about the spacious hall, with its rows of desks and its awe-inspiring atmosphere, they were told that in the olden days,— even later, — each public servant of the government had to keep his little candle burning at his desk to give him light at his own expense. The Senate, and the Council Chambers, and the governor's room, with their busts and portraits, among them that of their old friend, as the girls had now come to consider him, Francis Higginson, and the governors, Endicott, Winthrop, Bradstreet, and others, were seen and duly honored.

In the State Library they discovered a very precious Puritan relic. This was the old Bradford manuscript, of which they had heard so much, " The History of Plymouth Plantation." They gazed at it with " fearsome awe," as Peggy declared, and then reverently read, " Having undertaken for ye glory of God and advancements of ye Christian faith and honour of our king and countrie, a voyage to plante ye first colonie in ye northerne parts of Virginia." The time-worn page seemed to bring the old historian of Plymouth very near to the girls, as they studied the quaint and cramped, but perfectly legible, handwriting under the glass case.

A little later they had crossed " Little Miss Beacon Street," and were following the Wiseacre and the Best Beloved to the " Long Path," which, that worthy gen-

tleman said, should be one of the first sights to be visited on the Common.

The girls followed carelessly, engaged in merry chatter over the things ancient that they had just seen in the State-House; but they had gone but a short distance, when suddenly, at a sign from Peggy, they stopped abruptly. There were a few hurried whispers, mysterious nods, and repressed laughter, and then they had turned and were stealthily making their way back to the Shaw Memorial, facing the State-House.

"Um-m," said Peggy, with a significant raising of her eyebrows, still watching the couple ahead, who were so engrossed in each other's conversation that they had not noticed that the rest of the party had gone "on a strike." "The doctor did not inform us," continued the young lady, "that the Long Path was renowned as a sort of Lover's Lane, for it was there, you know, where the Autocrat and the demure little schoolmistress were united in the holy bands of — love. Who knows? The atmosphere left by the much-talked-of lovers may inspire old Wiseacre to follow his example, and tell Miss Marston —"

"The idea, Peggy!" broke in one of the girls disgustedly. "Why, the doctor must be forty-five if he's a day, and as for Miss Marston, why, she must be —"

"Miss Marston isn't thirty yet, and that's not old," cried Peggy, rushing valiantly to the defense of the Best Beloved; "and as for Wiseacre, I don't believe

he is forty-five yet, and, then, he has converted me to his views. For, after all, why should love — real love, you know, and not the sugar-candy kind that melts in a month,— ever grow gray, hairy, wrinkled, grumpy, and sour?"

"Peggy, it never does," asserted Rona solemnly, "for it is just love, even if it attacks the old and aged. But then, I think you girls are all talking nonsense," she added, suddenly remembering Miss Marston's secret and loyally determined to avert any intimations of it until the auspicious moment for its revelation should arrive.

As Poco, who, with guide-book in hand, began to explain Saint-Gaudens' bas-relief on the memorial, in which Colonel Robert Shaw is represented as mounted and riding by his colored troops, some of the party sat down upon the seat beneath, to rest. Others peered closer at the young Civil War hero, who was only twenty-four when killed, leading an attack on Fort Wagner, in July, 1863.

"Do tell us what makes the Common so renowned," said one of the group, "for one is always hearing about Boston Common, as if it were something very historic."

"So it is," returned the young historian, "for it is an old Puritan landmark, having been set apart as a 'trayning field' and for the 'feeding of cattell' as

early as 1634, when the waters of the Charles River flowed at its base. It was called Sentry Hill then, probably because of the sentry who used to keep guard at the foot of the beacon on top of the hill. It was used as a cow-pasture up to 1820, and one of the stories current is that the proud Madame Hancock, who lived opposite, when dining the notables of the Revolution, like Washington and others, when short of milk, used to send her maid to milk the cows in the pasture."

"I have read," remarked Margery, "that Boston is the only city with five hundred acres of green turf, and noble trees, in the very heart of it."

"Many important things have happened here, too," went on Poco. "For Indians as well as Quakers were hanged, as Mary Dyer —"

"And witches, too," asseverated Peggy. "For don't you remember what we read about old Dame Hibbens? They were hanged from the old elm down by the Long Path. But I say, girls, don't you think we had better catch up with the lovers? Probably the all-important proposal has taken place by this time," giggled the irrepressible girl, "and if we don't hurry to chaperone them, the dear young things may take it into their heads to elope."

"Peggy, do behave yourself," pleaded Rona in desperation, although joining with the girls in the general

laugh that followed this sally, as she tried to silence the mischief-loving girl by placing her hand over her mouth.

But Peggy, nothing daunted, only kissed the slim little hand, and then, with her arm around Rona's waist, led the way across the Common. Poco, still clinging to her little red book, told them about the noted statues scattered here and there on the green, and pointed out a very ordinary-looking sheet of water, which she said was the noted Frog Pond. At one time, she stated, it had been a real pond, but was now only an artificial one.

But they were now standing in front of a little grassy mound surmounted by a railing, called the Old Burying Ground. Just a bit of death in the midst of life, thought Rona, as she peered at the lichen-covered slabs, that, crumbling and moldy, stood about on the grass, and then glanced off over the Common, where the living in nature and life were enjoying its lawn and the shade of its trees.

A salute was now given in honor of America's first great artist, Gilbert Stuart, who lies buried here, and then the cavalcade swept on and inspected the Army and Navy Monument, which Peggy insisted was worthy a salute, as it commemorated the brave of the sea.

As they hurried down the Long Path, some one told how she had read that before the Revolution, under the

auspices of a society to promote industry and frugality, young spinsters, "decently dressed," came out on the Common. With their spinning-wheels they spun under the eyes of many admiring Johns, who, no doubt, tried to make love to the pretty spinners in the sun, as they made the wheels go round.

Judith had just finished telling about the planting of the trees on the Mall, when Peggy cried, "There they are!" Immediately the girls looked up, to see the doctor and Miss Marston conversing on one of the seats under the shade of an ancient tree, quite oblivious of the fact that they had several young ladies under their charge.

"Oh, where did you girls run away to?" inquired the Best Beloved, the pretty pink flush deepening in her cheeks as she saw the girls. The doctor looked crestfallen, one of the girls whispered, at this interruption to his love-making, but if he did, he adroitly concealed it, for he immediately turned the girls' attention from himself and his companion by asking if they had seen the site of the Old Elm.

As it happened, they had not, and in a moment or so they were all gazing at the spot in the center of the Common where had once stood the Old Elm, a noted landmark of Puritan days. Ann Hibbens, Mary Dyer, a noted Quakeress, Margaret Jones, and others had been hanged from its limbs.

A half hour later the girls, refreshed by a dainty

little repast served at one of the restaurants on Boylston Street, with their pockets stuffed with bread, started for the Public Garden. Here, after doing homage to Edward Everett Hale, Charles Sumner, William Ellery Channing, and other great Americans whose statues skirted the Garden, they followed the Joy Girl into one of the winding paths, and, under the shade of the stately old trees, drew forth their crumbs of bread.

They had not scattered them long, when to their delight, the squirrels and pigeons came shyly peeping about. The Joy Girl was in ecstasies as she crooned a low, melodious kindergarten pigeon-song, as the gentle doves, with their green- and blue-tipped plumage, came and perched on her shoulder, or pecked from her outstretched hand.

The English sparrows, usually so bold and boisterous, perhaps shamed into shyness as they saw the gentleness of the first-comers, now made their appearance. But they did not venture too near, for, alas! they had been driven away so often that they evidently feared a like reception awaited them. Peggy and Rona, taking pity on them, finally succeeded, by their gentle coaxing, to get them to come and enjoy the feast.

But at last even the Joy Girl tired of the sport, and so, throwing their last crumbs on the path, to see the birds come in flurrying speed towards them, the girls

started for the lake, that had been luring them, with its shimmering ripples and graceful swan-boats, to come and take a sail.

A walk down a curving path, then over a picturesque little bridge, and they were standing on the platform on the edge of the water, waiting for their turn to sail on the "feathered boats," as the Joy Girl called the graceful wooden swans that skimmed the shiny surface. No, Miss Marston and the doctor, and one or two others of the party, preferred to sit and watch from the shore, while Rona, Peggy, Poco, and the Joy Girl ventured to enjoy the pleasure of a sail. They glided along so swiftly, and yet so smoothly, under the blue sky, past green shrubbery and velvet grass, that Rona was enjoying it to the full, although regretting that her seat was not low enough for her to dip her hand in the cool, tree-shadowed waters.

Presently, as she suddenly glanced up from the glimmer of fountain, statue, monument, and flaunting flower-beds that peeped here and there from among the tree-shaded paths or grassy stretches of lawn, her heart gave a sudden leap. She had just noticed a young gentleman on the seat in front of her, talking to a little girl on his lap. There was something so curiously familiar about the poise of his head, the square set of his jaw, that it sent her mind roving back through space to ascertain where she had seen him before. Before she had decided this puzzling trick of

memory, there came a sudden exclamation, followed by the wail, "Oh, I've dropped my bag into the lake!" The outcry came from the Joy Girl.

Rona, in mute dismay, looked up just in time to see little Ann Kelly, with tear-misted eyes, watching the little black bag go sailing along over the water. The next moment, before any one could divine her intention, with a sudden movement she bent forward and made a lunge at it with her pink sunshade. But, lackaday, the Joy Girl's arms were short, and the next instant a shrill cry and a loud splash proclaimed the fact that the school mascot, as well as her bag, had gone for a plunge into the lake.

CHAPTER XXII

THE DOANE BOOK

FOR a moment there was a paralyzing silence, and then Rona, as she saw a blue tam sail placidly away with the ripples, like some straggling lily-leaf, and the eddying circles of silver where the owner had dropped beneath the surface, uttered a shrill scream.

Her scream was followed by another, and then another, as the girls all joined frenziedly in, in terrified excitement. But by this time Rona was on her feet, and as she saw Ann's curly black head come bobbing up, and heard her stifled cry for help, with reckless abandon she flung her hand-bag and her kodak aside, and was about to plunge in after her, when she felt a compelling grip on her arm.

"No, sit still. I'll get her. The lake is not deep." Before these words could imprint themselves on the girl's consciousness, the white-flanneled figure of the young man in front of her, who had been sitting with the child on his lap, had leaped into the lake. In that one instant, as Rona heard the cool voice with its decisive ring, her subconsciousness flashed its light. He

was the man who had saved her from falling off the roof of the Gambrel-Roof-House Tea-Party at Salem!

A dive, a few strokes, a struggle, a sudden gripping, a million splashes, and Ann had been hauled back to the boat. She was dripping, pale, and frightened, but, as Peggy joyously shrilled, she was all there!

Beyond doubt she had swallowed an ocean of water, and was sputtery, shivery, and chattery, but in a moment even these necessary adjuncts to an unexpected plunge into cold water had subsided, for an old gentleman on shore — for the boat had quickly made its way thither — had administered a stimulant. A moment later Ann, with the old joyous gleam — the gleam that had gained her her nickname — in her eyes, was smiling up at the anxious group from under her black-fringed lashes.

Alert minds become telegraphic in an emergency, and some one in the crowd — for of course a crowd had gathered — rushed to the street and hailed a taxi, while a couple of Boy Scouts loitering near had formed a seat-chair and carried the little girl to it. It seemed but a flash of time, and then little Ann and Miss Marston were being whizzed back to their hotel.

As Rona turned towards the girls, who, big-eyed with excitement, stood watching the fast-disappearing car, she heard that cool, calm voice again. She swung about on her heels, to see the owner rubbing his hand through his hair as if to wring out the water, as he

laughingly but vehemently protested to the doctor: "No, I'm all right. I'll not take cold. There'll be another taxi up in a moment, and I'll be home in no time." Then the young man was shaking hands with the doctor — in a strangely familiar way — had lifted the little girl into a car, and then he, too, had whirled away.

"Ah, here's another car!" said the doctor. "Now, girls, jump in, for we must not desert Miss Marston; and then, too, the little lake-plunger may need some attention." There was the confused sound of several exclamations, a squeezing and pushing, as they all crowded in, here, there, any way, even to sitting on one another's laps, and the American Footsteppers, after a day of many sights, a strange discovery, and an adventure, were en route for the hotel.

Naturally Ann was not permitted to join them at dinner, but was tumbled into bed and made much of by the Best Beloved and the girls, who were unfailing in their endeavors to make up to her for her fright and exposure. But if Ann was not at dinner, some one else was, and that was the young man who had rescued her.

Peggy declared it was a romance in high life, for it turned out that the young man, who had seemed so friendly with the doctor, was the son of a life-long friend of his, a boy, as he called him, whom he had known from the time he was knee-high to a grass-

hopper. Of course there was nothing else for him to do but dine with them that night, and meet his party. The doctor had assumed quite a proprietory air for the last few days, just as if Miss Marston and the girls, too, belonged to him, as one of the girls observed wonderingly.

A delightful surprise came to Rona later, when she found that her dinner companion was "Mr. Bunthorne," as one of the girls had dubbed the doctor's young friend, which was not an inappropriate appellation, considering that, like that much-courted swain, he was the only young man in the midst of a bevy of young and charming damsels.

No, of course, Rona did not call him that to his face, but, as she had overheard the remark, and had unfortunately missed hearing his name when he was presented to her, she found herself on the point of doing so several times. O dear! she was so anxious to speak to him,— to thank him for his timely rescue of her on the roof at Salem.

During the first course, however,— the doctor had ordered a table d'hote dinner in a little room just for private parties,— he did not even look at her, for the doctor kept him busy plying him with questions about his father, and other mutual friends, whom he had not seen for some years.

"O dear! if I only knew his name," lamented disheartened Rona, "then I could thank him." Of

course he had been overwhelmed with expressions of gratitude from every member of the party, as far as the timely rescue of the Joy Girl was concerned.

Just as Rona had cleared her throat and taken a long breath, as if to make a beginning at conversation,— to say *anything* to get her companion's attention,— he suddenly turned towards her and said pleasantly, "Well, my young friend of the Gamble-Roof-House Tea-Party, how have you been since the roof incident?"

Rona gasped, and then, with a joyous thrill to her voice, cried: "Oh, then you recognize me? Isn't this just too lovely!"

The young man, somewhat abashed at this unexpected delight at a very commonplace fact, stared a moment and then replied: "Oh, I recognized you as soon as you stepped on the swan-boat in the Public Garden. Not at all surprising, I think," he continued, smiling into the girl's eyes, "for a girl with eyes the color of yours would not be forgettable in a hurry."

"But it was dark when you found me on the roof," persisted Rona, forgetting the implied compliment in her amazement.

"Yes, I know, but I had seen you before you slipped on the roof. I had been watching you for some time. In fact," he added boldly, "when I saw you step behind the screen and fail to come back, I wondered where you had disappeared to. From curiosity — for

you know women do not possess all of that undesirable attribute — I stepped to the railing, and — then I saw you doing the sliding act."

Rona, by this time, was voicing her thanks for his timely rescue at a most opportune moment. And then, led on by his apparent interest and sympathetic manner, she told how she had come to step over the railing.

"The ring — it was a gold one, with my name on it — is the only thing I have in the whole world to prove my identity, for you know," she added sadly, "I was found when a baby, a little waif, and have never known my parents. So you can well imagine my absolute despair when I saw that ring rolling down the roof."

"I am more than glad, then, that I was the lucky knight who came to your rescue," replied her companion as he bent forward and asked, "Is that the little ring suspended from the chain on your neck? And may I see it, please?" he asked, as the girl silently nodded. He was just working a little scheme that had come to him to learn her name.

In a moment the ring was being slowly turned over in his hand. "Rowena Doane — that is a very quaint name. Doane?" he added hurriedly. "Why — is your name Doane?"

"Yes," replied Rona, staring at him with astonished eyes; "Rowena Doane; although the name I am gen-

erally known by is Rona Hillis. Hillis is the name of the gentleman who found me and brought me up."

"That is strange," said the young man, gazing at her fixedly. "Here, shake!" he suddenly cried; "for my name is Doane, too; Arthur Doane."

Rona gazed at him in speechless wonder, oblivious of the held-out hand. In a moment her mind was alertly at work. "Doane?" she almost screamed. "Oh, then, will you tell me about the Doane book?"

"The Doane book?" repeated her companion dazedly. "Why, yes, I believe we have —"

"I was told by Mrs. Wyeth," went on Rona excitedly, "that I would find the Doane lineage book in the Public Library in Boston, but, O dear! I could not find it. Oh,"— with a deep sigh,—"if I could find that book, I would be the happiest girl in the world!"

"Well, if finding the Doane book will make you the 'happiest girl in the world,'" replied Mr. Arthur Doane, amusedly, "I think I can give you that happiness, for we have one at home."

Yes, it was true: Mr. Arthur Doane lived in Boston, on Commonwealth Avenue, but a few steps from the hotel, with his parents and two sisters. One of his sisters was married, and it was her little girl he had taken for a sail on the lake when he rescued the Joy Girl. But, best of all to Rona, was the fact that a lineage book of the Doane family was in his possession. Now she would certainly find a clew.

Before dinner was over it had been arranged that the doctor was to accompany Miss Marston and Rona the following evening to the Doane residence, to meet Arthur Doane's family, and to look up Rona's pedigree in the long-sought book.

That night Rona was so happy that she couldn't sleep; she tossed and tossed restlessly on her bed, wishing morning would come, which would mean just so many less hours to wait to see the book that had so often occupied her thoughts. The sight-seeing of the day, with its ride to Cambridge, was not keenly enjoyed by the girl, for her mind was intent on the anticipated joy of the evening.

Nevertheless she was glad she had seen the bronze statue of Sir Harry Vane in the vestibule of the Public Library, the charms of the Fenway, and the beautiful residences of Brookline. The University City, with its fifty or more houses of learning, its renowned College Yard,— once the training-field of the patriots,— with its fine old trees and its beautiful gates, were stored up in her memory-book as things that would always remain with her.

A milestone, said to have been set up by Governor Thomas Dudley, the founder of Cambridge, was eagerly viewed, as it belonged to the list of things colonial, and then they were in New Towne. Here, on a tablet in Dunster Street, the site of the home of Governor Dudley was seen. Not far away was that of

the home of his daughter Anne, the poetess, who lived here with her husband, their old friend, Simon Bradstreet, as early as 1631.

The site of the first meeting-house, built a year after the laying-out of the town, and that of the first school-house, came in for a share of attention. As Peggy expressed it, "Somehow, the seeing of these sites, just places, you know, makes you feel that the Founders really lived, and were not myths of the imagination."

On their return drive the doctor pointed out Massachusetts Hall, one of the college buildings, which, he said, marked the site of the home of the first president of the renowned college, Henry Dustan. The statue of John Harvard on the green near Memorial Hall was of interest to the girls, for it not only proved that he had given the college its name, but that it was an old Puritan landmark, the first college in America, having been built in 1638.

But a still earlier site than the Puritan one was located, and that was where the statue of Leif Erickson had been erected, on the place where it was believed his little hut stood when he was in Vineland, on the Norseman's expedition to America.

A bell in a near-by church had just clanged out midnight, when a figure, stretched flat on its back on the bed in Rona's room, suddenly rolled over, then it rolled

back again, and then sat up. It was Peggy, who had been awakened by a strange sound. With ears agog, she listened; it sounded like some one sobbing. She turned to awaken Rona, but her hand clutched empty air, and the next moment she saw that she was the sole occupant of the bed.

Then in a twinkling, she knew. It was Rona, crying in the closet. "O dear!" thought the girl distressfully. "What shall I do to comfort her? I was afraid all along that she would be disappointed, but I just can't stand this," and then Peggy was on her feet, making her way gropingly towards the door.

She wrenched the knob, but it would not budge. Oh, Rona was holding it! Poor soul, she was so proud. Well, she would go back to bed and let her have her cry out, for what else was there to do? So, with her own eyes misted, she tiptoed back to her couch. No, she was not going to sleep. How could one sleep when some loved one was suffering, and one couldn't do anything to comfort her?

Peggy stifled a sob, rubbed her eyes on the corner of the coverlet, and then lay very still. But alas! youth is rash, and young, and healthy, and soon a gentle snore told Rona, still with her face buried in the skirts in the midnight blackness of the closet, that her friend would not proffer her sympathy then, when her wound was still bleeding. Dry-eyed, she kept her vigil of grief, in a sort of dazed wonderment as to why

God allowed her to suffer so many disappointments. But she was not going to be wicked again, she was just *going* to trust Him, for *He knew.* Perhaps this was His way of saving her more suspense and weary longing, by letting her know that her parents were really dead.

Yes, she had gone to the Doanes with Dr. Wayne and Miss Marston. They had been cordially welcomed by an elderly gentleman with iron-gray hair, and a hearty, jovial voice; also by a stately matron with formal courtesy, and a tall young lady with glasses,— a college girl,— who was most fashionably attired, and who greeted Rona with a formal graciousness that was a little too patronizing to appeal strongly.

But Arthur was cordiality itself, and, as the stiffness of the first few moments wore away, he set them all at their ease by laughingly telling — to Rona's discomfiture — of the Gambrel-Roof-House incident at Mrs. Wyeth's, in Salem.

The first part of the evening was spent by Dr. Wayne and Mr. Doane, senior, in talking about past-time reminiscences, with Mrs. Doane as a pleased listener, while Arthur and Miss Marston talked war, the young man showing the latest war-maps, and pointing out the present locations of the British and French armies.

As for Miss Doane, a lank-limbed young man, who also affected glasses, with a beard à la Van Dyke, a prominent nose, and an air of great distinction, had

entered, and immediately monopolized that young lady's entire attention. They animatedly discussed cubist art, and the plays of Ibsen and Shakespeare in a way that made Rona feel very ignorant and small, and caused her to wonder if she would ever know enough to entertain such a learned specimen of the opposite sex.

She felt very forlorn indeed; the war topic would have interested her at ordinary times, but when one's heart is going pit-a-pat in a thumpish way, with long-deferred hope and suspense, it lost its attractiveness. But suddenly Arthur happened to glance up, and, catching a glimpse of a pale, anxious little face, its owner sitting forlornly alone on the divan, immediately remembered, and hurriedly produced the Doane book.

Rona's heart leaped wildly. Oh, she could endure anything for this! With eager fingers she opened the book and read on the first page the quaint and rather lengthy title: "Philip Doane of Hertfordshire, England, and Plymouth, Massachusetts, 1591–1679, with his American descendants to the eighth and ninth generations."

She turned to the next page and perused hastily, impatiently, in a nervous tremor, the information that the said Philip Doane was born in Hertfordshire, England, on the estate bestowed upon his ancestors by Henry VIII. That he was a graduate of Cambridge, somewhat of a traveler for those days; that he had

come to Plymouth from England, 1640; that he had been deputy governor; that he had helped to revise the laws and constitution of the Plantation; and that he had come to a sudden and untimely end by a marauding band of Indians shortly after his removal to Deerfield, Massachusetts.

Rona heaved a deep sigh. Yes, this was all very interesting, but how did it tell who she was? At this instant, Arthur, who had been amusedly watching her, said teasingly, "Well, Miss Rowena Doane, how are you going to go about it?"

"Why — I — oh, I don't know," replied the girl in a choked voice, "for it looks, oh, so terribly perplexing."

"Right you are," answered Arthur, "for it is perplexing to older heads than yours. Now, let me see — Rowena. Suppose we look up all the Rowenas in the book and see who's who?" But unfortunately, although there were any number of Rowenas discovered and traced to their original progenitors, there was not one that possibly could be the young girl, who, with cheeks crimson with excitement, and with an anxious frown, sat and turned over page after page.

"Now, then," again suggested Arthur hopefully, "we'll look up our line." He then turned to Warren Doane, one of the sons of Philip 1st, and followed the line down to his own father, under the number 1465892, and read, "Norval Doane, b. 1860, m. Mary

Westly; children, Arthur Norval Doane—" He paused, and then said, " Well, you don't belong to our line, for Mary, Alice, and I end the line right here."

Mrs. Doane, who had been an interested listener in this genealogical hunt, now suggested that they look up every one in the ninth generation, to which Rona's father would probably belong. The girl, who was struggling to restrain her tears, brightened perceptibly, and a moment later, while Arthur ran his eyes down one page of the said generation, Rona did the same with the opposite page. But all to no purpose, for not a clew was found.

Rona, weary and heart-sick at the disappointment that again confronted her, but determined not to show her pain, smiled drearily as Arthur read aloud the last name on the last page: " Children of Malcolm Asaph and Rowena Doane A. Cornell 17846672. Philip Comstock Doane, b. 10 May, 1871. M. 23 March, 1896, Caroline Norton. Had one child, viz. Gilmour Velsor Doane, b. Jan. 1898." " Oh, I say, mother," Arthur interrupted himself abruptly, " isn't that the Colonel Doane whom we met at Fort Rosecrans two years ago? Don't you remember? He was a tall man with prematurely gray hair. By Jove! Miss Rowena, he had eyes just like yours,"— Arthur turned and stared into Rona's eyes,—" that rich, reddish-brown color, now that I come to think of it."

The girl's heart had begun to leap again with hope.

"Nonsense, Arthur," interposed his mother coolly, but annihilatingly, "I remember whom you mean, but he only had a son. Yes, I believe he had had a daughter, but I think she was dead." Mrs. Doane warmed to the subject. "There was some mystery about her. I never asked, for I hate curious people, but I overheard a lady telling about it one afternoon on the veranda. I didn't hear all she said, but it seems the girl's name was never mentioned to her father or mother. It looks as if there were some scandal connected with it. Mrs. Doane was a pretty woman, but rather delicate. No, Miss Hillis, they can't be your people." And then Arthur suddenly discovered that the Doane book had been published before Rona was born, in 1899.

And that disposed of the matter apparently. To be sure, Arthur said that if she ever found a clew, and would send the name to him, he would look it up in the Doane book,—and that was all that had come of Rona's anticipations and deferred hopes.

Rona shut her lips tightly. Other people had to suffer disappointments, as Miss Marston had gently intimated in her attempt to cheer the girl, and she would have to do the same. Then, utterly weary and aching for sleep, she sought her rest by the side of the still gently snoring Peggy.

The next morning there was a hurrying and scurrying to get the train, for, as the American Footsteppers

had seen colonial Boston, and their time was limited, their next stop was — home.

Rona felt very depressed on the train and listened wearily as Peggy and Poco argued as to what they should do next summer. Peggy contended that they should study about the Patriots, for they had fought for the liberty given us by the Founders, and had united the colonies into a nation, while Poco claimed that the Founders of the other colonies should be studied first, as they had also contributed virtues to the principles back of the flag.

"Of course they did," acquiesced Margery, "but somehow it seems more natural to learn about the Pilgrims first, for they seem to have given us our motto, 'In God we trust.'"

"Yes, and the Pilgrims endured more persecution, and suffered more for the sake of doing right," interposed Peggy, "for they were the first ones to separate themselves from the state, and to come over here, that is, as a body, for religious purposes."

"But they not only separated from the state," cried Rona, suddenly aroused, "but they seem to have tried to live in their own lives the principles they gave us."

"It seems to me," said Betty timidly, "that they tried to live the way Christ taught his disciples to live when he was on earth."

"Yes," added the Best Beloved softly, "their lives

were beautiful in their simplicity and grandeur, for, as Betty says, they tried to live by the precepts Christ has taught us."

There was a short silence, and then Rona exclaimed suddenly, "It seems to me as if each one of the leaders of the Pilgrims stood for some one particular thing, as Brewster was the spiritual teacher, Standish the military leader, Winslow the diplomat, Bradford the just and wise ruler, and —"

"Yes," added Poco quickly, "but they were all sincere and honest."

"Brave and courageous," supplemented Peggy.

"Patient and cheerful," cried the little Joy Girl with shining eyes.

"And they all had faith," enjoined Betty.

"And they gave us liberty," cried Poco.

"Yes, that is so," said Dr. Wayne, who had been reading his newspaper, but had now turned towards the girls, "they gave us liberty by teaching us that each individual has the right to think his own thoughts, and to express his aims in life, which is God's gift to man, governed, of course, by certain laws."

"Well, it would appear to me," said Miss Marston, "that living the higher and more noble qualities means, after all, the right kind of liberty."

"Well, I think," said the little Joy Girl, "that the Pilgrims were much better than the Puritans, for they

did not kill the Quakers and the witches, as did the settlers of Salem and Boston."

"That is true, little Miss Ann," said the doctor; "but you girls must remember that the Pilgrims were a simple people with simple aims, that they had suffered more to gain their ends, and that they had lived twelve years with the broad-minded Hollanders, and in that way had become more tolerant, just, and humane."

On reaching home Rona found a deserted house with only one servant in it, which was not calculated to inspire her with cheer. Mr. Hillis was away for a few days, Ellen said, while Maggie, whose ample bosom Rona had found a refuge for her childhood's griefs, was visiting her son in the country.

There were a few hours spent in unpacking her trunk, in repacking it with her evening gown, for the hop at West Point, and then came a long lonely evening, in which the girl couldn't seem to think of anything but her disappointment. In the morning there came a telephone message from Judith to dine with them that evening. The invitation was gladly accepted, for Rona loved a real homey sort of dinner, with Judith's mother to mother her a bit.

As they gathered in the living room one after another of the girls dropped in for a chat with their leader, so that, before the evening was over, it had proved a regular reunion of "The Daughters of

America." And then, when everybody was talked out, and the girls had begun to think about getting home, Madame Briedel and Miss Isadore Briedel were announced.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE SOLDIER BOYS

THE unexpected appearance of Isadore and her mother — a surprise Judith had planned — meant a warm welcome from the girls, as they were not only pleased to meet the refugee again, but were greatly interested in the lady who was the heroine of a war-story.

Madame Briedel was a tall, slender lady, whose courtly stateliness at first made the girls feel shy, as her brilliant black eyes gazed down at them from her pale, sorrow-seamed face. But as they noticed the glistening bands of white in the blue-black hair, that told of the unmitigated horrors through which she had just passed, their hearts were stirred to pity.

The winning charm of her manner, and the warmth of her smile, as she thanked them again and again for helping to brighten the life of her sorrow-stricken daughter, won them immediately. "And this little — brown-haired mademoiselle,"— she placed a hand on Rona's shoulder,—"Isadore tells me, has been her greatest comforter. And she says you have the name of 'America's Daughter,' "— she smiled into the girl's eyes,—"and that you love the liberty."

Rona was scarlet at this unexpected prominence, and was very grateful when Judith suggested that, if Madame Briedel was willing, they would be pleased if she would tell them her adventures after leaving her daughter in the church at Mont des Cats. Madame smiled her assent somewhat mournfully, and in a few moments, as the girls grouped themselves about her, she told how, after leaving Isadore alone in the church, she walked slowly down the long, straight road that led through a once red-tiled French village.

"I was faint from hunger — and my feet were sore and bleeding,"— her hands were clasped nervously in her lap,—"but I knew I must find food or my child would die. Ah, it was a desolating sight to see those shell-scorched elms, once so beautiful in their stately greenness, but now drooping with broken boughs and twisted limbs, cruel reminders of the German marauders from whom we had been trying to escape.

"Fallen chimneys, charred walls, and splintered doors lay heaped in ruined fragments around roofless houses, the wreckage of what had once been peasants' homes, but now they were but hideous ruins, crying out to God for vengeance upon the ruthlessness of a barbarism that could bring such utter desolation to those who were innocent!

"I tottered painfully along, eyeing with sickening dread the sides of the road strewn with a strange litter of knapsacks, canteens, pots, bottles, while here and

there the gleam from a French soldier's coat, or the tinsel of a cap, came from the dying grass by the ditch. Everywhere were signs of a hurried flight, the disordered retreat of soldiers pursued by the invading Prussians.

"I looked into wall-less kitchens, where crumbled the remains — perhaps the last — of a meal, and saw closets whose hidden contents had been suddenly exposed to the gaze of the passer-by. And then my eyes blurred as I spied an empty cradle by the side of a demolished bed, and wondered what had become of its tiny occupant.

"Suddenly I saw the flicker of a light. It came from the cellar of the only house whose lower story was intact. My heart leaped! I quickly stooped and peered within the door, to see the fierce eyes of a peasant woman glaring at me.

"'Oh, mercy!' I pleaded, in a broken voice, raising my hands supplicatingly. 'Give me food! Give me food!' Perhaps her heart was big, as you Americans say, or it may have been that she was reassured by my words,— I had spoken in French,— for in a moment she brought me a bowl of milk — she told me she had managed to hide her cow in a cellar — and a piece of bread.

"I would have fallen on my knees to thank the good creature, I was so overjoyed, but she prevented me,

and I tremblingly told of my hidden child, and our hurried flight from the château.

"Then the old woman began to sob, and told me that she had just come from burying the bodies of her daughter and her grandchild, a girl of thirteen, over yonder. She pointed to a field, where, strange to say, there remained a patch of green that had escaped the havoc of the shells. It had been crushed by tramping feet, and its flowers were a blur of reds and blues, but above its mangled beauty shone a little white cross.

"Yes, she had made a little mound over the spot where she had buried her children, as she called them, and on it had placed the white cross. She had not planted a black one, as over the graves of the soldiers, she brokenly cried, 'for they were innocent and pure. O God! they had never known evil — until —' Her voice choked piteously, and she covered her face with her blue cotton apron.

"'She was my only child, a widow, but still young and comely. O Holy Mary! they bayoneted her — and then fled. My granddaughter I had hidden in an old chest in the recess of the kitchen, thinking to release her later, but she swooned from fright, and —' the woman's sobs almost strangled her —'a drunken, carousing soldier fell asleep on the chest, and she was smothered!'

"I left the old peasant woman still struggling with her grief, and staggered gropingly along the road towards the church, and then —" Madame Briedel was half sobbing, much to Isadore's distress —"I must have fallen by the roadside, for when I regained consciousness I was lying huddled on the floor of a automobile, whizzing swiftly over the road.

"I found that the car was filled with staff-officers proceeding to the railroad depot at Aire. I roused myself and tried to make them understand that I had left a child, a daughter, alone in a church, and then, — I knew no more." Madame Briedel's voice had died mournfully away, like the weird rustle of the dying wind in the fall.

But in a moment she had recovered herself, for Isadore had crept to her side and was holding her hand reassuringly, while the girls made a dismal attempt at encouragement as they saw their friend's efforts to console her mother. But Madame Briedel, with her dulled eyes staring straight before her, as if living over again the tragedy of those terrible moments, continued:

"For weeks I was delirious at Aire,— again in a church, which had been transformed into a hospital by the doctors and nurses on service at the station. As soon as I was able, through the kindness of a Red Cross ambulance driver, I returned to Mont des Cats, but, alas! my daughter was not there.

"I sought the peasant woman, but she, too, had disappeared. I eagerly inquired of the trailing refugees who straggled dazedly over the road, with pale, sad faces, burdened with their household goods. Oh, it tore my heart to see the little ones,— dear babies,— walking stoically along, doing their part in this pilgrimage of the innocent, as they patiently and uncomplainingly carried bundles, sometimes too large and heavy for their little arms. I finally returned to Aire, almost demented with the paralyzing suspense and anxiety as to the fate of my child. Oh, if she had fallen a victim to the merciless atrocity of the German soldiery!

"But God is good." A sudden calm had come into the woman's voice. "Yes, I remained at Aire, doing just the little I could to help the nurses in their tremendous task of caring for the wounded and dying, and one day light came. I met a member of the Refugee Committee, who had heard, through a gentleman of the Belgian Relief Fund, of a young girl by the name of Isadore Briedel, who had lost her mother in France, and who had been taken to America. The rest was so easy, for, at the end of the long, dark road, light had come!" Madame Briedel's voice quivered as she drew Isadore's head close against her breast.

"And to think," smiled Isadore through a blur of tears, "that all the time I was at Aire my mother was in the hospital. Why, I would have had to walk but a

few steps and I would have found her." She looked up, with eyes full of affection, as her mother bent and kissed her tenderly. As she was about to speak again, Mrs. Carvel, who thought the girls had been down among "the weeps" long enough, relieved the situation by asking Madame Briedel some little questions about her journey over, as to meeting submarines, and so on.

This set the ball of cheerfulness rolling on its way, and in a few moments the girls were chatting with their customary gladness, as they told Isadore of their plans to meet at the New York Central the following morning to take the train for West Point. They were much disappointed when they learned that Isadore could not be one of the party, for Madame Briedel felt that the death of Isadore's father would prevent her mingling in the gayety of a dance.

The ride to West Point was warm but pleasant, and as they rode up the incline from the station to the hotel, they caught bewildering glimpses of a green plain and shady trees, from where tent-tops peeped luringly, and then they were in their rooms at the hotel, flying about in great haste, for Dr. Wayne and Donald had been announced.

There was no need to state that they were rejoiced to see Donald again, and to admire him more than ever. Heretofore he had appeared to the girls as a broad-shouldered, clever young chap, with an

open, manly countenance, but now he had added a certain dash, "the captivating glitter of the military," as Peggy defined it, to his plain, everyday charms, that immediately made his admirers fall in love with him over again.

With Dr. Wayne and the Best Beloved leading the way, the party set forth to do the Post with the gallant soldier boy. But Donald had only escorted the girls as far as the veranda when they met a number of smart-appearing cadets,— it had all been arranged before hand, it seems,— who were immediately presented to the party of sight-seers. These cadets, although grinning with delight to be the first fellows in on such a treat of feminine charm and loveliness, were, withal, most dignified in soldiery bearing, and manifested a deferential courtesy to the guests that won the favor of all the party. Forthwith Donald's star began to descend, and from henceforth he was just Peggy's "special," a name, one of the cadets explained to Rona, that was used when a cadet was specially devoted to one young lady, who apparently appreciated his admiration sufficiently to allow him that honor.

A moment or so and they were all standing in hushed silence, gazing at Storm King, a green-clad sentinel, whose purple tops towered high in stately grandeur over the little plain nestling among its crags, with a protecting silence that elicited quick exclamations of admiration. Between swaying vistas of leafy

foliage the silver river was seen, now glittering in the sun like a translucent mirror, specked by a solitary white sail, and churned by the steady plowing of the Albany day-boat, which had just discharged its quota of passengers at the wharf.

Crow's Nest came in next for a share of attention, as a fitting mate to its mountain companion, and then they were all watching the tiny ferry-boat gallantly steaming its way across the river to Garrison's little railroad station, almost hidden by the friendly green of its hilly background. A sudden shrill shriek, and the calm of the sunny landscape under a fleckless blue vault was broken by a swiftly moving railroad train, leaving a long trail of black smoke on its express journey to the great metropolis.

Now they were walking under the shade of stately elms on Officers' Row, with Cavalry Plain on their left, where dress parade took place every night at six sharp, as a cadet explained to one of the party. Beyond the plain, in a belt of woodland skirting the edge of the cliffs overlooking the river, came the glimmer of a white-walled city, the summer camp of the cadets.

For the present, however, the picturesque cottages on the Row, with their well-trimmed flower-beds, little stone walks, and trees, were the attraction. The coziness of swaying hammocks, easy-chairs, and the flutter of feminine skirts, in strong contrast to a soldierly

figure here and there in regimentals, suggested an atmosphere that was beginning to make itself felt.

A moment later, as a dashing cavalry officer in dark-blue uniform, his trousers seamed with a broad band of yellow, was seen coming up the walk, every girl stood at attention. A doffing of his forage-cap in graceful salute to some fair lady on a veranda, and the wind in the sails of the soldier boys had simmered to a calm, as the girls thrilled to the fascination of army life.

Peggy heaved a sigh, her eyes narrowed, and then her hand had snapped up in a salute to the great, to the amazement of her companions in brass buttons. But the young lady, spurred on in justification of the salute, declared it was to the great ones of everyday life, the soldier boys and officers of the United States Army.

A hasty survey of the academical buildings was now taken, a little longer one at Grant Hall, when it was explained that it was the place where the cadets "feed," known as mess hall. After Cullum Hall had been given an interested glance as the place where the hops take place, they retraced their steps and presently were admiring the picturesque old chapel and the gray towers of the library.

After a short rest on the steps of the latter, they started to explore the windings of Lover's Lane, a walk on the craggy heights above the river, whose

numerous paths, rocky nooks, and summer-houses had caused it to become famous as "Flirtation." Undoubtedly, the doctor declared, it had gained its name on account of the many couples who were always to be spied seated in some leafy retreat, indulging in that harmless sport.

"Not always harmless," admonished Miss Marston, in reply to her companion.

"Ah, but it would be harmless," laughed Rona's escort, a blue-eyed cadet officer, "if the girls would define it as we fellows do, that is, 'Attention without intention.'"

There was a general laugh at this definition, and then they were treading the intricacies of jutting crags, mossy dells, summer-houses overlooking luring ravines, and moss-grown retreats glamoured with romantic mystery, and the gleam of the river glinting between dancing leaves.

But the enchantments of the famed path were forgotten, as Kissing Bridge burst on their view. As one of the boys explained that every cadet felt it his bounden duty as a son of Mars to lay siege to, and win a kiss from, every girl he was fortunate enough to lure to the fated arch, each and every girl present inwardly vowed she would not be lured within a mile of the "confectionery bridge," as Peggy immediately named it.

But the crowning glory of the day was the Parade.

As they all started from the hotel, Peggy was reported missing, for the Best Beloved always rounded up her charges at the starting-point. The Joy Girl, however, immediately spied her coolly sauntering along Officers' Row with a smart-looking officer, which gave rise to the envious query from many of the girls as to who had introduced him? But Peggy's triumph was forgotten in a wild scamper to get a seat under the trees facing the Parade-ground, where all of West Point seems to congregate for the most interesting of cadet maneuvers.

They were just in time to see the battalion form, and stand calm and motionless. They were like wooden soldiers, Ann declared, as the cadet-officer passed in front of the statuesque gray and blue line, with its glisten of bayonet, the gleam of bell-button, and the nod of feathery plume on their caps, as stirred by the summer wind.

Now the cadet-officer, with his gold-laced sleeves and crimson sash, was coming with soldierly tread, across the green sward toward the officer of the day, who stood in rigid alertness, with eyes to the fore, on review. As the young officer halted, saluted, and in a firm, loud tone announced, "All present or accounted for, sir!" Rona recognized her companion of the afternoon, Morris Gilder.

When the orders of the day were given in a deep, powerful voice, from the officer in command, it

sounded to the girls as if he had called "Humph!" Later, however, Donald made it clear that it was not "Humph!" that had been the order, but the command, "Arms!"

Boom! sounded the sunset gun over the plain with startling reverberation; then, for an instant, there was a hushed stillness, the only jar the restless curvetings of a spirited horse, whose nerves had been shocked by the unexpected report, as he stood with a number of fashionable equipages and automobiles on the left of the Parade-ground.

The band broke into a lively two-step, and the drum-major swung his baton in air, as the soldier-boys wheeled on their heels to the left. "Forward! March!" rang sharply out from the young officer. And then the long columns of blue and gray were marching, wheeling, then marching again, over the velvet turf, to the popular air of "Tipperary," until, a moment later, they had broken ranks, and were disappearing down the street in front of the somber and gloomy-appearing buildings, to quarters.

Some hours later Rona felt as if she was being twirled through space, as, to the enlivening strains of the newest waltz, she was whirled rapidly over the floor by the strong arms of young Gilder. Indeed, she was having a most glorious time, as her sparkling eyes and flushed cheeks attested at this, her first hop at West Point, and yet, she had her troubles.

She had feared her partners would be few and far between, and instead they were galore, for Donald had not only had her card filled out, as he had the cards of the other girls also, but he had divided and subdivided dances, a customary procedure at West Point. Poor Rona was bewildered by the countless array of beardless youths, in the identical blue and gray uniform, who presented themselves before her with, "This is my dance!" If it had not been that she had seen her former partner disappear, she would have vowed she was dancing with the same cadet.

Mr. Gilder had finally rescued her, and then, as she finished her dance, she begged him to let her rest, which necessitated going in to one of the adjoining rooms, so Rona could escape her onslaught of partners. Suddenly remembering that she had lost her fan, Mr. Gilder volunteered to go and see if he could find it.

Rona, red and heated, slowly waved her handkerchief to and fro, while staring curiously about the big room, with its pictures of officers of an earlier period, at the same time noting that she was the only one in the room, with the exception of two officers in full-dress regalia, who were conversing near the door.

Presently she leaned forward, her lips parted in surprise. She had heard her own name! Yes, Colonel Doane! She glanced quickly and keenly at the two men. Why, she had seen one of the officers before, but where? Involuntarily she rose and took a step for-

ward, for her mind had instantly reverted to the conversation between Arthur and his mother as they had discussed the Colonel Doane whom they had met at Fort Rosecrans. Oh, could this be the same man? What nonsense! She was always imagining that she heard or saw that name *Doane*. She sat down again, although her foot nervously tapped on the floor, as she smiled at her own foolishness.

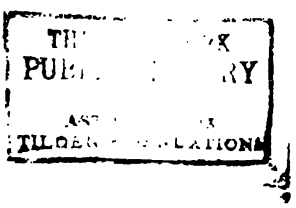
But Mrs. Doane had said that he had had a little girl. Could it be that — She glanced up at the tall, soldierly figure, with the dark hair streaked with gray, who now, deserted by his companion, was watching the dancers in the adjoining room with an indifferent, careless air. What a fine face he had! Why, she had seen him before, for there was something about his dark eyes and drooping mustache that seemed curiously familiar. And then again she heard Mrs. Doane telling the strange story of the daughter that he never wanted mentioned. Rona wondered what she could have done. Could it be — Why, no, if she was dead, why, there could be no doubt — And then, impelled by some strange feeling, she arose and walked slowly towards the officer. She would look at him nearer, for Arthur had said that that Colonel Doane had eyes like hers. And, oh, she wondered if that little girl —

She could not stand this agony. If she could only know! And then Rona hurried forward towards the



"DID YOU EVER HAVE A LITTLE GIRL—NAMED—
ROWENA?"—*Page 391.*




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door. As she reached the side of the officer, swayed by some undefinable and uncontrollable impulse, in a choked voice, with a frightened air, she gasped, "Is this Colonel Doane?"

The man swung about and faced the trembling girl in surprise. He started as he saw her face, and a sudden light flashed into his eyes. Then, drawing quickly back, for he had stepped towards the girl, he replied with cool, distant formality, "Yes, that is my name. Can I do anything for you?"

"No!" stammered Rona confusedly, "only — I — thought — that — er — Oh, did you ever have —" her voice was broken, almost gasping,—"did you ever have a little girl — named —Rowena?"

CHAPTER XXIV

AMERICA'S DAUGHTER COMES INTO HER OWN

"DID I ever have a little girl named Rowena?" repeated the man mechanically. He stared fixedly, and then, as if in sudden comprehension of her meaning, cried, "What do you mean? Yes, I did have a little girl named Rowena,—" his tone was abrupt,—"but what has that —" A sudden light swept into his eyes, his face grew tense, and then he caught Rona by the arm, crying, "Girl, who are you?"

"My name — is — Rona Hil — Rowena Doane," gasped the girl, shrinking from the man's grasp as if in sudden fear, as she saw the leaping flame in his eyes.

"Rowena — Doane. Whom do you belong to?" demanded Colonel Doane imperiously. "Who are your parents?"

"I don't — know," faltered poor Rona. "I was a lost child. Mr. John Hillis brought me up — and —"

"Come, let us sit down here," cried the gentleman agitatedly, "where we shall be alone." He led the way to the farther corner of the room and motioned for the girl to be seated. "Now, tell me your story,"

he commanded impatiently, as if laboring under some strong emotion.

"There is nothing much to tell, that is, not very much," faltered Rona,— by this time she had regained a little of her nerve,—" for, you see, I was just found, when a baby, in Mr. Hillis's courtyard — he lived in New York. One of the neighbors said she saw a Chinaman go into the yard carrying a bundle —"

"A Chinaman! Go on! Go on!" almost shouted her companion, his face white and agitated, as he again clutched roughly at her arm.

"Yes," repeated Rona, "one of the neighbors saw the Chinaman go in the yard, carrying a bundle, but he came out again in a moment or so without it. She noticed the occurrence, she said, because he came out so quickly. And then I was found by Maggie, all wrapped up in some brown stuff,— burlap, I think she said it was. Maggie is Mr. Hillis's servant," explained Rona. "I was crying dreadfully. Mr. Hillis had just lost his wife. He didn't know what to do with me, so I just stayed in his home. He has always been very kind to me," ended the girl abruptly, as if a sudden burden had been swept from her shoulders.

"You say this servant, Maggie, found you?" the man's voice was under control, but his eyes glittered strangely. "But was there nothing to tell — who you were? You say your name is Rowena. How do you know?"

"Oh, I forgot!" cried Rona, catching up the fine gold chain that encircled her neck. She quickly unfastened it and held out the tiny gold ring, as she said, "This ring was on my finger; it has the name Rowena Doane on it."

The man snatched the ring with the dangling chain and hurried with it to the light. He held it up and examined it intently as he slowly read aloud, "Rowena Doane." There was a moment of tense silence, and then he turned and made his way towards Rowena, his face working convulsively, while his eyes softened to a strange, tender light as they rested on the young girl, who stood upright, awaiting his approach in a sudden divination that her long search was ended, and that this man was her father!

"Rowena Doane! Why, my little girl, you are my daughter!" And the next moment bewildered Rona was folded within the man's arms as he kissed her pale and frightened face once, twice, thrice, with a sort of frenzied fierceness that almost paralyzed her, as, limp and exhausted, she inertly yielded to these caresses, as strange and startling emotions swept through her heart.

"Oh, are you sure?" she cried at length, raising her head and gazing at him piteously. "Oh, don't make a mistake! Don't make a mistake!"

"Sure, little daughter," cried the man as he pressed the girl to him again. "Why, you belong to me and my wife —"

"Oh, have I a mother?" almost screamed the girl, in an ecstasy of joy.

"Yes, and now we shall go to her. Ah, but let me explain first," he added contritely, as he saw the bewildered face of the girl. "Listen. I am Philip Comstock Doane. I married Caroline Norton in 1896. A year later we had a son, Gilmour —"

"Oh, then *you* are the Colonel Doane that Arthur and Mrs. Doane, his mother, knew at —"

"What Arthur and Mrs. Doane?" questioned her father hurriedly.

Then briefly but graphically Rona related her experiences in trying to trace her father and mother; how she had finally found the Doane book, and how Arthur and his mother had come to tell of meeting a Colonel Philip Doane at Fort Rosecrans.

"Ah, I remember meeting them; it was about a couple of years ago," nodded the colonel, as his eyes lit with sudden memory. "What a strange thing," he added, "that you should have heard of me through them! But let me continue. We had one son, Gilmour. In 1900 you were born and named Rowena,— an old family name, one that I always loved for its quaint sweetness. The little ring was given to you when a year old. I placed it on your tiny, clinging finger. Your mother laughed at my fancy, but, thank God, my fancy has restored you to us again!

"A month or so later you were missing, and also a

Chinese servant whom my wife had had some trouble with. He had a bad, revengeful temper. Your mother always said he would be revenged upon her because she had had to rebuke him on several occasions. I used to laugh at what I called her folly. But it proved to be no folly.

"After your disappearance," continued Colonel Doane, "we immediately decided that you had been stolen, and by the Chinaman. We set detectives to track him and he was eventually trailed to New York. But the very morning the detectives reached his room in that city he had again disappeared, carrying a child with him, for a woman in an adjoining room said she had heard a child crying. All possible effort was made to locate you and the man, but nothing ever came of it. Ah, now I see he did not know what to do with you; he had only taken you in a moment of mad revenge. He did not dare sully his soul with a crime. He feared you would betray him,— for he must have had an inkling that the detectives were after him,— and so got rid of you in the quickest possible way. Thank God that you fell into kind hands. But where is Mr. Hillis? Is he with you to-night?"

Tersely and rapidly Rona told her story of her journeyings with her friends, and how they had come to be at West Point. As if to corroborate her recital, Peggy, Margery, Donald, Dan, and Mr. Gilder appeared in the doorway. The young cadet-officer

waved her fan triumphantly as he saw her, while Peggy, with an exclamation of pleasure, flew to her side, crying: "Oh, you dear thing, aren't you almost dead? Did you ever have so many men trailing after you before? Really—" She halted abruptly, suddenly aware that Rona was in the company of a stranger.

"Oh, this is one of my dearest friends," cried Rona, her face dimpling as she proudly pulled Peggy towards her father; "and this is another friend, Miss Margery Heath, and her brother, Dan,"—Dan had suddenly made his appearance that afternoon; "and this is Mr. Donald Wayne, a cadet, and Mr. Gilder, another cadet."

"Yes, I see," returned the colonel smilingly, as he bowed pleasantly to Peggy, Margery, and Dan, and then extended his hand to the two cadets, crying cordially, "I am glad to meet you, boys."

By this time Rona, realizing with sudden sharpness, who the colonel was, and his relationship to her, burst out excitedly: "Oh, Peggy, what do you think? I have found my father! I have found my father!"

"Where is he?" cried Peggy, whirling on her heel and glancing about the room; but a sudden swift look at Rona, as she suddenly sidled up to Colonel Doane, who, with a quick movement placed his arm about her, and — she knew.

"And, Peggy," went on the happy girl, "I have a

mother, too!" And then, in sudden remembrance, she flashed, "Oh, father, why don't you take me to her?"

"Yes, little daughter, I will," replied the man in a tender voice, "but I have been thinking — that — perhaps — I had better go and prepare her — for this sudden gladness. She has been so accustomed to believing you dead that I do not want to tell her too abruptly."

"Oh, no, indeed," acquiesced Rona readily, instantly divining the wisdom of his words. "We must not startle her. But you go, father — father"— she repeated in a half-undertone, as if in love with the very sound of the name that meant so much to her; "I will wait for you here."

Yes, Rona had a mother, a very dear, lovable lady, who, although rudely startled by the unexpected news that she had a daughter,—"A lovely young girl," the colonel cried joyously, "just the kind you would have made her, mother, too,"— was not so disturbed that she lost one moment in hastening to her side.

Then joy came to both mother and daughter —"the little mother-girl," as Miss Marston had so often designated Rona — as they sat in that big room in Cullom Hall, and told one another the many things in their past lives. Father, restlessly happy, walked up and down, putting in a word now and then to add to the explanations, or telling something his wife had forgotten.

Finally he turned and said smilingly, "Little daughter, I told you we had a son, Gilmour —"

"Oh, yes, father," burst forth Rona animatedly, "but where is he?"

"He is here at the Point," returned the colonel; "he is a cadet, a third-classman. Now I will go and hunt him up, and how delighted he will be to know you have been found!"

Such a personage as a brother exceeded Rona's wildest expectations, so, although she smiled eagerly at the tall cadet who followed her father into the room, she felt somewhat shy of him. But when he took her into his arms and kissed her with boyish affection, while looking down at her with eyes that were the counterpart of the dear mother's, her shyness vanished, and she immediately felt that they had been the best of chums all her life.

For the next few hours Rona felt as if she was living in some strange, happy land o' dreams, for so much joy had come to her that it really seemed as if she would awaken presently to find it one of her "visions," as she afterwards told the girls. No, she didn't have a chance to say this to them until some time later, for that night she slept in the room adjoining her mother's, who seemed obsessed with a strange fear that if she let the new-found daughter out of her sight, that she would suddenly disappear.

The next morning, after Rona had aided her father

in sending a telegram to Mr. Hillis to acquaint him with the good news, and also one to absent Isadore, she and her mother had a little "love talk," as Rona called it, all by themselves, for there were so many things to talk over and explain. As they sat on the steps of the library, watching the plebs being put through their paces, Rona turned to speak. Instantly a certain vague, illusive feeling that had troubled her ever since she had met her mother the night before, assumed shape.

"Oh, mother," cried the girl with intent eyes, "were you and father at Plymouth a week or so ago?"

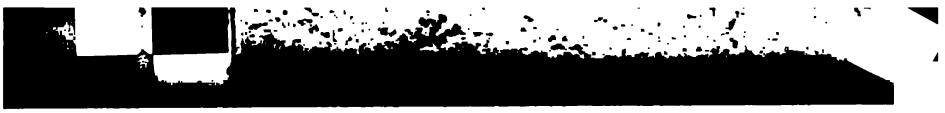
"Why, yes," replied Mrs. Doane in a surprised tone. "We stayed at the Plymouth Rock Hotel over night."

"And you wore a brown traveling-gown, and —"

"Oh, Rona! Why, yes, you were the little girl at the dinner-table — I remember." Mrs. Doane's eyes lighted strangely. "I watched you all through the meal, thinking how happy you looked; you made me think of my little lost one —"

"And it was your lost one all the time, mother!" cried the happy girl. "Wasn't that strange! But do you know," she added, clasping her mother's hand in hers, "I saw you, too, and was wishing that I had a mother like you,— and to think you were my mother! Oh, I am so happy! I am so happy!"

And then the girl told of her long search to find



her,— how her heart would thrill with hope, only to ache with bitter disappointment. "For, oh, mother! I wanted you so!" Rona added in a choked little voice.

Mrs. Doane's eyes filled with tears as she drew the girl close to her and cried softly, "Ah, daughter, your heart ached, but not half as badly as mine, dear, for my love was the mother-love."

The story of the bottle-doll was now told in a childlike manner by the girl, as she explained the part it had played in her life, and the incentive it had been to her. "Yes," breathed the girl with a deep, happy sigh, "I have always kept it, hoping it might mean the finding of my own mother, and it did bring me wonderful luck after all."

Colonel Doane, who had just received a return telegram from Mr. Hillis, now joined them. "Good luck favored me," he announced, "for Mr. Hillis had just returned to the city. Here, little daughter," he continued, "do you want to read it?"

Rona took the yellow slip of paper eagerly, and then, after a second's pause, read aloud:

"'My Dear Colonel Doane,

"'Delighted to hear the good news. Will be up on the twelve-thirty train from New York.

"'John Hillis.'"

"Oh, I'm so glad," cried Rona in exuberant delight, "for, oh, father, I am so anxious to have you meet Mr. Hillis. He is an awfully quiet man,— you

know I told you how we would sit all through our dinner without a word of conversation,— but he has been so kind to me, and I think he was beginning to like me — just a little," she added modestly.

At this moment Peggy, with Donald on one side and Dan on the other, and four or five cadets in her trail, swept up to the group; for, while Rona was making the acquaintance of her parents and Gilmour,— for he had also joined the group,— this young lady, in a campaign of beardless youths, was slaying her tens of thousands. For, as Judith and Margery declared, every gray coat seemed to have suddenly been struck with an intense longing to know the slim girl, whose sun-gold hair, blue eyes, and peeping dimples had worked a potent charm on every heart.

"Come, Rona," she cried after greeting Mrs. Doane and the colonel, and nodding blithely to Gilmour, who, as yet, had not been added to her coterie of admirers, "we are all going down on Flirtation, and we want you to come with us. O dear!" she lamented ruefully, "we have to leave right after dinner, and this will have to be our last stroll."

"Oh, no," cried Colonel Doane sharply; "you cannot carry Rona home with you. She must remain with us, and then, too, Mr. Hillis comes up this afternoon."

"But what shall we do then?" cried the dismayed Peggy; "for we —"



"I'll tell you what you'll do," answered the colonel smilingly. "I will telegraph your parents that you will not be home until to-morrow. And then allow me, ladies,"— he bowed gallantly, for several of the girls had joined the group,—"to have the pleasure of your company as my guests over night."

"Oh, girls, do you hear that!" cried the delighted Miss Peggy. "Oh, isn't that the dandiest thing going? But, oh, perhaps Miss Marston will not consent,"— Peggy's tone grew tragic at the thought.

"I think that will be all right," answered Colonel Doane; "for I suggested something of the kind this morning to the lady and she made no objection."

And so it was settled, and the girls, happily buoyant in the anticipation of another day at the Post, which would give them the pleasure of a band concert under the trees that evening, set forth for their stroll, all but Rona, who was not quite ready to leave her father and mother.

A half-hour later, however, as Mrs. Doane and the colonel returned to the hotel so as to give Mrs. Doane a chance to rest before dinner, Gilmour and Rona started to join the others down on Flirtation. They had not gone far on the craggy terrace when they met Betty and Margery. The two girls looked white and anxious, and their eyes gleamed excitedly.

"Oh, Rona," they both exclaimed breathlessly, with an apologetic glance at her brother, "we have some-

thing to tell you!" This young man, however, was perfectly willing to part company with his sister just at that moment, but he wanted some one else in her place, and that was Betty. For, somehow, the demure, gentle-eyed damsel with the straightforward glance had attracted the lad's fancy.

Raising his cap politely, he said, "May I not take you down the path, Miss Bird? I would like to show you Kosciusko's Garden; you know we were talking about it last evening."

Betty's clear skin turned a deep pink. She hesitated, and then looked at the two girls appealingly, as if undecided whether to accept this invitation or not.

Rona, who had quickly divined that her demure little friend had made an impression on her brother, cried hastily, "Oh, yes, Betty; you and Gilmour walk on and we will come later, for I want to sit here and get a view of the river."

As Betty and Gilmour strolled down the path Margery burst out with: "Oh, Rona, the greatest thing has happened! I am just dying to tell you! Betty and I were sitting down on the rocks near one of the summer-houses, when I heard the sound of low voices. I looked up and there was the Best Beloved and Dr. Wayne sitting in the summer-house. And, oh, Rona, he was holding her hand! And before I could get Betty away, he kissed her, *right there* in the summer-house! Oh, I was so ashamed," went on the young,

shocked voice. "And, Rona, what do you think? Miss Marston never objected a bit. Oh, I did not think she was that kind of a person!" Margery sat up stiffly, as she censured this lady with due primness.

"Well, she isn't," answered Rona, with a merry gleam in her eyes, for Margery did look so fearfully shocked. Her face sobered instantly, however, as she continued: "It's all right, Margery; you need not be shocked at all, for — don't you tell a soul — Miss Marston is engaged to Dr. Wayne! She told me all about it some days ago, but wanted it kept a secret for the present. Do not tell any one what I have said, unless Betty, of course."

In the excitement attendant upon Mr. Hillis's arrival — he had motored up from New York — Miss Marston and her love-affair were forgotten. For there was much to discuss and many plans to be made, since, as her father said, Rona belonged to them now, and must make her home with them. And yet, at the same time, Mr. Hillis was to be considered, pleaded Mrs. Doane, for she could not forget his kindness to her child.

But Mr. Hillis, on learning that Colonel Doane had recently been transferred from Fort Rosecrans, as a coast-artillery man, to Fort Hamilton, and was only at the Post for a few days on a visit to his son, immediately suggested that Rona remain with him until she graduated from Madame Reval's, and then spend

her summers and week-ends with her parents at Fort Hamilton. This plan was agreed to, and then Mr. Hillis surprised Rona as he told her parents what a faithful little ally she was in the early part of the summer when he had injured his ankle.

"Yes," he added a little sadly, "Rona's gain will be my loss, for I was just beginning to realize what a dear little girl she is. But I sincerely wish her every happiness in life." He then invited Colonel Doane and Mrs. Doane to spend a short time with him in the city before proceeding to Fort Hamilton.

"Yes, indeed, the American Footsteps has proved a grand success," enthusiastically declared Peggy to Rona that afternoon, as she sat next to her at a little informal luncheon given to the Daughters of America by the Best Beloved. Miss Marston, at a lull in the festivities, not only announced her engagement to Dr. Wayne, but surprised the girls by telling that they had been engaged before. But they had separated, she blushingly explained, owing to a little misunderstanding, and had not met again until on the boat to Provincetown.

After this announcement and explanation, congratulations followed, in which Rona received her share, as the girls were sympathetically happy with her in this new joy that had come into her life. Peggy, who was effervescing with good spirits, after the hostess and the Daughters of America had been toasted, jumped

up and proposed a toast to America's Daughter, who, she declared, had come into her own. "She has proved that she has a right to the name I gave her," she cried jubilantly, "not only by birthright but also by her patriotic devotion to the cause of Liberty. I drink to —"

But Poco had interrupted her, and with laughing eyes, was crying:

> "The rosy-cheeked lass, with eyes of brown,
> A smile of joy, with never a frown.
> Our clever, jolly American girl,
> Who stands for the flag with its stripes of pearl!
> 'America's Daughter!'"

"Ah, just a word," said Judith, holding her glass high, as her eyes gleamed animatedly. "Our America's Daughter is not only a clever, jolly American girl; she is a girl with a fine sense of personal independence,— her nation's birthright. She knows she has the right to feel as good as anybody else in the world, with a few exceptions,"— the girl bowed smilingly at Miss Marston, and then turned again to the somewhat bewildered Rona. "She knows she has the right to her own individual thoughts, feelings, and actions, governed by a few laws, in order to express the aims and purposes of her life, and that she is a type of every American girl in this 'land of the free and the brave.' Let us drink to the happiness of our American girl, Rowena Hillis, America's Daughter!"

As Rona, with rose-red cheeks, rose to respond to this toast, she cried: "Girls, I thank you all for your good wishes, and wish every one of you as much happiness as has come to me. And now I want to offer a toast in memory of the men and women, who, by simple faith in God, and by trying to do right, *by living the principles they gave to us,*— which seems to me is the right kind of liberty,— made it possible for me, 'America's Daughter,'"— her eyes sparkled,—"and for all of you girls, 'The Daughters of America,' to be, as Judith said, types of the real American Girl. I drink to the memory of the Founders of the Nation."

"But before we give this toast, girls," the Best Beloved was speaking, "I want you all to remember that each one of you is a miniature nation in yourself, and if your flag, *your character,* stands for the great principles, you are a link in a chain of individualities that makes the nation. The purer and better your link, the stronger and greater the nation's chain, that is, the principles back of the flag. And as each one of you lives these principles, and helps others to live them, in time not only our Nation's flag, but every emblem in the world will represent the great principles which, as Rona said, stand for the right kind of liberty. And —"

"Why, then," cried Poco, "there will be no more war!"



"Yes, for every flag will stand for peace," added Peggy, enthusiastically.

"And Christ will come and reign on the earth," said Betty softly.

"Oh, it will be just Heaven!" exclaimed Rona, with shining eyes.

And then Poco was again heard, as with reverent voice she quoted Sprague's inspiring lines:

"'And never may they rest unsung,
While Liberty can find a tongue!
Twine, Gratitude, a wreath for them
More deathless than a diadem,
Who to life's noblest end,
Gave up life's noblest powers,
And bade the legacy descend
Down, down to us and ours.'"

THE END



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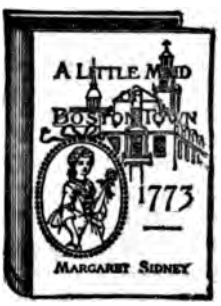
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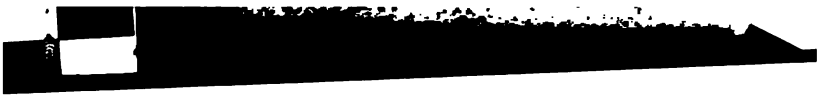
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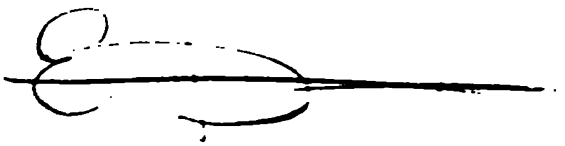
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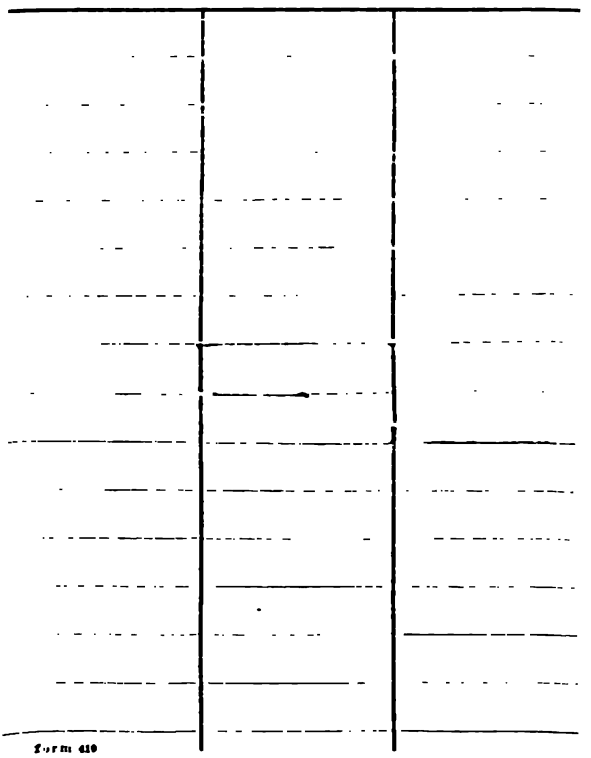






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